Grand Prix international

BRAZIL

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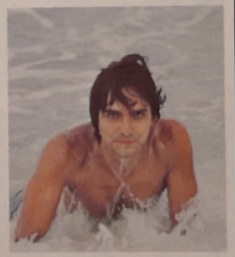

One normally expects locals to know what the weather is likely to do, but poor Nelson Piquet made a mess of weather forcasting at his home Grand Prix. The rain dampened his ardour.

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Without skirts, the cars are much less stable. Brabham, Williams and Arrows are all in search of lost ground effect.

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Lotus have been having a lot of trouble with their 88, not on the track but with the other constructors. Mike Doodson spoke to Chapman about his reaction.

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The paddock in Rio de Janeiro

MARCH IS JUNK : "OFFICIAL" !

After failing to qualify at Long Beach, the entire March team under designer Robin Herd and team manager John Macdonald lost no time in taking their cars to Laguna Seca near San Francisco for intensive testing.

For a disappointed Derek Daly, the results were not encouraging. *"I'm convinced there's something seriously wrong with the front end of the chassis"*, he insisted as he prepared to start Friday practice in Rio. *"It's a problem we haven't had with our original test car, which is built differently from the 'production' model. Maybe the prototype is a bit heavier than this one, but we've been reasonably close with it to the times set by the Williams during tests at Brands Hatch."*

By the end of the unofficial Friday session, the Irishman's worst fears had been confirmed in alarming style. Driving down one of the Jacarepagua circuit's straights, his car went off the road without warning and hit the guardrail at speed.

No sooner had the wreck been brought back to the garage than the cause of the accident became apparent. A lower front suspension mounting point (on the opposite side from the impact) had torn out of the monocoque. There was no question of the damage being repairable, and Daly's weekend was over.

Standing by the pit wall as the other teams started official qualifying, Derek said that he was glad, in a way, that the puzzle had been solved. A bandage around his shin was the only mark of what had been a bad moment (his leg struck the steering rack in the crash), and he said with relief that the stronger prototype car would be flown out to Argentina for the next Grand Prix in Buenos Aires.

The normally taciturn John Macdonald, not known for making public statements of any sort, was moved to explain. *"The car,* he announced gravely, *is a pile of shit. And that's official."* Macdonald added that there has a misundestanding over different types of metals in the monocoque construction.

Designer Robin Herd was unable to add a more technical explanation. He was already on the way back home to the team's factory in Bicester.

LONDONO : NO LICENCE

The Formula 1 debut of Colombian Ricardo Londono will have to wait until after the Brazilian GP. The 31 year-old Can-Am and IMSA driver was both surprised and disappointed when he discovered, after having tried the works Ensign during pre-race Michelin tyre tests, that his application for a Super licence had not been received by FISA in Paris. The car, meanwhile, carried his Colombian sponsor's decals.

"It looks as though there has been some trouble with the administration at the headquarters of the Colombian Federation, explained Londono. *There is no doubt that I have done more than enough racing to qualify for the Super licence, and Yvon Léon of FISA has been extremely helpful. Unfortunately, it looks as though we may have to wait for a meeting of the Formula 1 Commission before the licence can be issued."*

Meanwhile, a number of international drivers who have competed against Londono in major races — including Mario Andretti, Patrick Tambay and Eliseo Salazar — agreed to sign a letter to FISA stating that they considered him «to be ready to be allowed to qualify for F1 events». But it wasn't necessary. Londono's licence was granted the day after the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The Ensign car was taken over for the race at Rio by regular Ensign driver Marc Surer, who still hopes to find the sponsorship needed to continue with the team for the remainder of the year. No doubt his excellent fourth plce will help considerably.

JABOUILLE FINDS FRUSTRATION

On Saturday morning, after the morning's unofficial session at the Jacarepagua circuit in Brazil, Jean-Pierre Jabouille set off to find Guy Ligier. After a swift discussion, it was announced that Jabouille had decided to go no further for the time being, and that his place in the second Talbot Ligier would be taken by Jean-Pierre Jarier for the final session.

Yet the previous evening, Jabouille had appeared to be perfectly happy, particularly as he'd qualified at that time. *"Everything's fine,* he said, *I'm really making progress quickly. Tomorrow I'll do even better."*

But the next day he realised that he still wasn't as fit as he'd hoped to be. *"This circuit is very demanding, because the fast corners mean that you have to dab the brakes and get right back on the accelerator as soon as possible in the fast corners. Well, my right ankle is stopping me from doing this quickly enough and I'm losing a lot of time. Psychologically I'm fine, but I'm not up to it physically. I'm trying to follow some of the other cars, but I'm finding it frustrating because I can't go quickly enough. So I've taken what I believe to be the right decision, I'm not going on. It would be stupid to take a risk with the whole season by possibly crashing once again."*

Guy Ligier was so vociferous in his defense of Jabouille's decision that it almost seemed that it might have been his idea in the first place. *"No, no, it's Jean-Pierre Jabouille's decision,* explained the French-driver. *I must say that Guy Ligier and the whole team have been very understanding concerning my problems. Guy Ligier has had accidents and he's come back to racing, so he knows what's involved."*

NIGEL SAVES A LIFE !

Although the Hotel Inter-Continental in Rio de Janeiro has two excellent swimming pools, the surf on the nearby Gavéa beach proved to be too great a temptation for Lotus drivers Elio de Angelis and Nigel Mansell to resist. Together with their team manager Peter Collins, they decided on the Tuesday before the Brazilian GP to take a swim in the Atlantic.

The three were lucky to survive the experience. No sooner had Collins stepped into the water than he was caught by the undertow and carried out 100 yards to sea. With ten foot waves breaking around him and over him, the Australian was very quickly in serious trouble. Without thought for himself, Lotus driver Nigel Mansell immediately went to the rescue. *"Fortunately I am a reasonably good swimmer,* said the 26 year-old Birmingham driver, *but the conditions were very bad. Peter wasn't strong enough to swim properly and we were being sucked under the surface by the currents. All I could do was to try and grab him and keep shouting to him not to give up."*

Before very long, de Angelis was also on the scene. *"Unfortunately he just didn't have the strength to help,* said Nigel, *and he had to get back to the beach."* Somehow, without any help, Mansell succeeded in getting a semi-conscious team manager back to dry land, where help was available to revive him.

But where was Elio? *"He was still in the water",* said Mansell, who had to be restrained from going back. It was only with help from a hotel lifeguard that the Italian was eventually brought from the huge waves.

For the remainder of the week, Team Lotus personnel understandably restricted their swimming to the hotel pool. *"Nothing would persuade me ever to go back into the sea",* admitted Nigel as he relaxed with his wife Rosanne. *"Someone told me after our escapade that as many as eight people a week are drowned on that bloody beach!"*

THE ECCLESTONE ROAD SHOW

For some time now, telephone callers to the Brabham factory asking to speak to Mr Ecclestone have been told that *"he's in Brazil I'm afraid".*

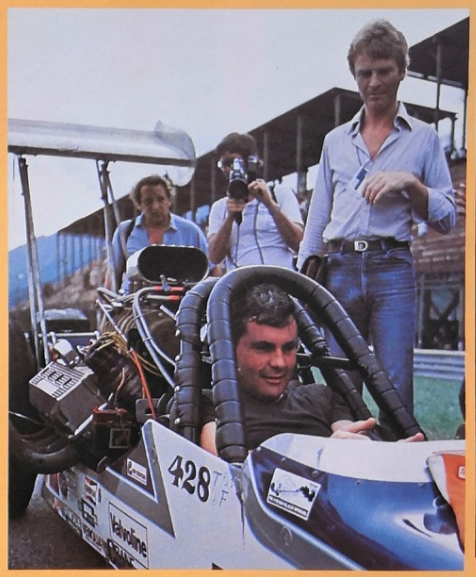
Once the Grand Prix got under way, the reason was quite obvious. Bernie Ecclestone was the organiser of the Brazilian Grand Prix, and he did everything he could to make it into a real show.

First of all there were the girls, three ravishing local beauties who spent most of their time taking off and putting on their clothes. Bernie organised them into various poses around various cars and drivers, before putting on another show to distract photographers.

He'd imported one of the fastest dragsters from the American scene, and spent almost more time around the bizarre machine than he did with his own Brabhams. He arranged for Nelson Piquet and Alan Jones to try the thing for size before it lip up its rear tyres and shot down the straight, its parachute braking it to a standstill almost before one realised that it had left.

Every showman has his finale, and Bernie's was impressive. Interestingly, it put the man himself at personal risk — no, not financially, his own health. Because the show involved a motor-cyclist who jumped from one ramp to another, and in between were parked valuable Grand Prix cars. In the very last one, directly in line with the bike's line of travel, sat Mr Ecclestone himself. He sat through every jump, as each time another car was added to the line-up. For one jump, Jean Sage of Renault sat in one of the yellow cars, but he wasn't there for long.

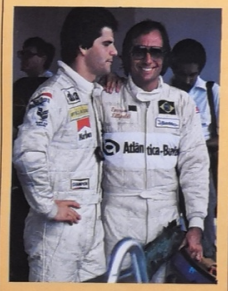
"I hope he falls on my car", grumbled one driver unhappy with his practice. But our flying Evil Knievel protege didn't fall on his car, nor Bernie, nor Jean. The insurance man could heave a sigh of relief, although it might not please him to know that apparently the last jump was right on the limit.



The paddock in Rio de Janeiro

BYE BYE EMERSON

Emerson Fittipaldi went into retirement at the end of last year in order to devote his time to his own team. But he took to the track again for the last time to drive a Formula One car an hour before the Brazilian Grand Prix was due to start, in order to bid farewell to his devoted public. They greeted him with a warm and unanimous round of applause. He did three laps in a Fittipaldi F8 and another lap of honour in a convertible. Then Emerson settled into the Fittipaldi pit to watch the first Brazilian Grand Prix to take place without him as a competitor.



JAN : "FRUSTRATED BUT NOT DESPERATE"

Five hours after the end of Saturday's official qualifying, the small curly-haired figure sitting under the harsh lights illuminating the ATS pit was unmistakeably that of Jan Lammers. Head sunk in his hands, the blond Dutchman watched the mechanics preparing his yellow car ready for tomorrow morning's warm-up session, hoping against hope that somebody else's misfortune might permit him to take over a place on the grid.

For Jan Lammers, back with ATS after half a season of disappointments with Ensign, had failed to qualify — not for the first time, either — by one place. "*There was definitely something wrong with the car,* he explained : *it was oversteering very badly, but only in the left-hand corners ... and here at Rio most of the corners are left-handers*".

"*At first we thought that the chassis was flexing, so we fixed that by strengthening the front bulkheads. Then we decided to take a close look at the sidepods, which may not be identical on both sides. But it looks as though the air which passes over the top of the car is having a greater influence than we had thought*"

With only one car in South America, the team was hard-pressed by the two front-end accidents which had stopped "Jantje" (and official practising). "*I was trying very hard,* he admitted, *and the car was bottoming out under braking and wearing away the underneath of the side panels. It was like having a skirt stick up : then the car suddenly understeered.*

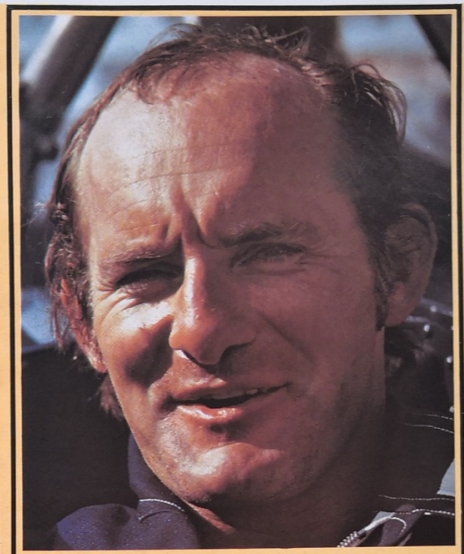
"*But the first of the two accidents wasn't my fault. I'm sure that something — possibly the front wing — broke and caused me to go off the road. The second shunt was my fault, though : we just seem to be running from one problem to another*".

Watching the mechanics changing an engine — just in case someone should drop out and he should get into the race after all — Jan tried to look on the bright side. "*It's always difficult for little teams like ours,* he said. *You have to keep cool and look to the future. We have a good team now at ATS. Everyone is working very hard and I know we can improve. That's why I don't feel desperate*".

As if to prove his point, in the unofficial warm-up on Sunday morning, Lammers topped the list of the fastest runners for more than half the session. And when Nigel Mansell went off the road, the ATS team hoped for a while that their man might be in the race. But in the end, all that Jan Lammers saw of his competitors was what he watched from the pit lane.

OUR SPORTING PIOLA

Our technical specialist, Giorgio Piola, an Italian by birth, is a sporting creature. Every morning the occupants of the Sheraton Hotel were able to witness the sad spectacle of our athletic friend as he jogged along the Copacabana beach in search of ...? Fortunately, his talent isn't limited to his fine technical knowledge, and his rather less impressive athletic efforts.

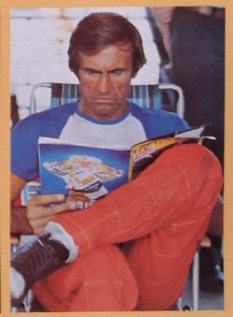


MIKE HAILWOOD IS DEAD

All motor sport enthusiasts will be immensely sad to hear of the death of Mike Hailwood who died following a road accident on March 21. Hailwood was world motorcycle champion ten times, and then turned to four-wheeled racing. He won the European Formula Two championship in 1972, finishing eight in the World Championship the same year. He moved from Surtees to McLaren in 1974, but the same year was badly injured in an accident at the Nurburgring and gave up racing. He was a marvellous character, and will be sorely missed.

FERRARI DEVELOPMENT

They don't stop working in the Ferrari factory. A V6 turbo engine is taken out of the car, and in goes a Comprex engine. The latter has the advantage of virtually no lag, but the centre of gravity is rather high because of the position of the Comprex itself which upsets the balance of the car. But the Scuderia are still working on it, and reckon on having a twin Comprex car at the Monaco Grand Prix. It will be four kilos lighter and they will be fitted on either side of the engine. With no lag, Villeneuve and Pironi will be something to see around the Principalite.



THE KNIVES ARE SHARPENED

Marco Piccinini and Jean Sage, competition directors of Ferrari and Renault respectively, are today the two thorns in the side of the members of FOCA. Initially they were suspected of having influenced the President of FISA — for their own advantages — when the latest rules were drawn up. But now it seems that they lead the witch hunt in Formula One.

What is the witch hunt ? It's a campaign by certain members of the Formula One circus against some of the English-based teams, Lotus and Brabham principally, who, according, to the 'Frogs' are guilty of interpreting the regulations contrary to their spirit.

The complaints, followed by more serious action, have principally been directed against Colin Chapman's double chassised Lotus 88. The Lotus boss has taken a fairly critical look at the other cars on the grid and reckons that at least ten fail to conform to either the six centimeter ground clearance rule or that rule which says that the forward part of the chassis has to be of the same thickness as the monocoque, as per the new regulations. So why hasn't he had his revenge ? "In 28 years of racing, I've never protested another car, apart from Brabham's fan car in 1978," he explained.

The other controversial car in the pits is the Brabham BT49 with its hydraulic suspension which raises it into legality in the pits, and lowers it for maximum ground effect once out on the track. No official action has been taken against the Brabham as yet, but there's a story that a small group of constructors went to see Ecclestone in order to warn him of what he might expect in the future. "We're not going to do anything here, Bernie, because it's your Grand Prix, you organise it," went the general line of chat if the rumours are to be believed, « but if your car is in the same specification in Argentina..." .

The knives are sharpened, there are more witch hunts on the way.

STEAMROLLERS AND SHARKS

They're simply the best at the moment. In Rio they took their fourth consecutive one-two.

There's something about steamrollers and sharks in the Williams team these days. The way they dominate Grands Prix has something about the steamroller to them : Carlos and Alan have now shared first and second places in each of the last four Grands Prix. But they're hungry as sharks to carry on with their steamroller act, and both of them felt that they'd done well in the Brazilian Grand Prix, one because he took the chequered flag, the other because he felt that he should have done so. And, according to the equally insatiable Frank Williams, there are other sharks : journalists who fell on the story that Reutemann had disobeyed team orders like a shark might fall on bloody meat.

Protected from the rain by a giant parasol, Frank Williams and his designer Patrick Head calmly watched the closing laps of the Brazilian GP. Frank marked his lap chart, Patrick his race card, noting the gap which separated their two cars in the lead from their nearest rival, Riccardo Patrese. The margin had been increasing gradually from the beginning of the race, and now Patrese was almost 50 seconds behind the two unstoppable Williams cars in their white and green Saudia-Leyland colours.

A year ago, when winning Grands Prix was something still new to the men from Didcot, there would have been a frown on Frank's brow. But for the fourth championship race in a row, a Williams car was well in command. And as their team personnel busied themselves with putting up the numbers on the pit signalling boards, Frank and Patrick conversed quietly over their electric headsets.

They were discussing tactics. It's not often that a team manager finds himself having to act as an arbitrator between the claims of his two drivers, but here was Frank, with his number two driver less than two seconds ahead of the team's leader, considering his next move. He would have to make it quickly too, for although there were still ten laps to go of the scheduled 64, the rain had slowed the pace so much that the race officials could be expected to bring out the flag after the regulation two hours. At this pace, that would be in eight laps' time.

"Do we let them finish in this order ?" mused Frank. *"Don't forget,"* said Patrick, *"that Carlos knows what's expected of him".* They both reflected on the agreement between their drivers, that if Alan should be less than seven seconds behind Carlos when they were lying first and second, then Carlos should drop back to let Alan through.

→

Carlos Reutemann played his own cards, and won his third Brazilian Grand Prix and his second for the Williams team.

Decisively, Frank made up his mind. "*A deal's a deal,*" he said, and called team manager Jeff Hazell to his side. "*Don't bother to give Alan the gap this time,*" he instructed, *give them team orders*". When the two cars passed on the next lap, Hazell's pit board read merely 'JONES/RET' in that order.

Both drivers saw the signal. As usual, their heads turned to look as they accelerated out of the last corner, Reutemann with the advantage of a clear road unhampered by the spray which enveloped Jone's closely following car. But the proud man from Santa Fe deliberately ignored the signal, not once but five times consecutively. Twice it was shown on Jones's board, then three times on his own. On the fourth occasion, lap 61, Reutemann set his fastest lap of the race.

By then it was obvious that there was no question of the agreement being observed by Reutemann. No emotion, no reprimand, showed on Frank's face. He had fulfilled his side of the bargain with his drivers, and fortunately Jones demonstrated his outstanding patience by refusing to compromise the team's result with a risky overtaking manœuvre in the flying spray.

Frank's feelings had showed only briefly, when the two misfiring Ligier-Talbots went past and Jarier ostentatiously waved team leader Jacques Laffite through to sixt place. "*It's simple for them,*" he said, *Jarier obviously needs to keep his position in the team while he can*".

As his stopwatch flicked past the two hours mark, Williams called Hazell again. '*Get the flag*", he said and the mechanics prepared to tumble over the pit wall to wave their men with the now traditional Union Jack.

It was just the beginning of the controversy between Frank's two drivers that would fill the world's newspapers the next morning. There must be many team managers who wish that they too could have problems like this.

It has to be admitted that the Williams team currently deserves the title of the best team in the world. Haven't they proved the fact with four one-twos in a row, with a non-championship win in between? Frank knows that he's broken records, and no one blames him for blowing his trumpet. "*I think I'm beginning to grow a big head*", he jokes.

What exactly is the most important element in this over-riding superiority? Is it the team itself, they way it works or its capabilities? "*We're among the best*", says Frank without false modesty, but with a certain amount of typically British understatement.

And the cars themselves, are they simply the fastest in the world? They were just as impressive under the Brazilian rain as they had been in the streets of Long Beach a couple of weeks previously. But if they're the best, they're the best in comparison to whom?

One must be certain not to discount the Brabham. It would surely have been well up there under normal conditions, either without rain or should Nelson Piquet have chosen the right tyres for the conditions, as any normal successor to Lauda would have done. "*We were utterly delighted when we saw which tyres he'd chosen at the start,*" said Patrick Head. "*If he'd started on wets, he would have led us. What an idiotic mistake. Anyway, just as well for us, he helped us a lot*".

Apart from the Brabham, the Alfas were soon out of the picture, the Ligiers had engine trouble (and handling during practice) while the Renaults were never at their best in the wet, and the Ferraris still suffered teething problems.

These thoughts were in Patrick Head's mind shortly after the race, when he'd changed out of his race gear into the rather more English uniform of a shirt and tie. "*You have to take what you can when you can. At the moment, we're just capitalising on what we can. Things will be different when the European season begins. I'm not just talking about turbo engines, but all the teams who will make a lot of progress between now and then*".

All the same, one has to realise that their cars appear to be simply the best of all. "*I think it's a question of balance, good adjustments and knowing the car well. There's nothing miraculous about our cars, we haven't even got trick suspension like Brabham's, although I think it's legal up to the moment that it touches the ground*".

What about the drivers? Are they the best in the World? "*They're amongst the top five or six, that's for sure*", says Frank.

In the generally happy atmosphere, they're about the only people who aren't delighted. Carlos Reutemann, the winner, remains quiet. No winner has ever appeared more sombre in his replies. Did he have a guilty conscience, or was he just fed up with questions about the pit board? "*I didn't see any boards*", he would say, and that's all. There were no smiles, although he had driven a superb race, and had never allowed Jones to get close enough to worry him.

The reigning World Champion can argue that he never had to make any effort or take any risks because his contract as number one driver meant that he would win anyway. For this reason, it was hard for Jones to accept his teammate's win. "*Maybe he didn't see the signs? He has a sight problem. He's short sighted*," joked the Australian afterwards. "*I now know where I stand. It's no big deal. It's just that I'm going to have to start the future races with a different mental attitude. Well, obviously it's a no holes barred situation. I'm just sorry that I didn't try a little harder with 15 laps to go. But we don't have to talk to one another about it. He has his contract in his briefcase, and I've got mine in my briefcase. I thought the thing was perfectly clear. Well, it is: it's every man for himself. I'm not going to be so silly as to behave myself next time*".

Alan's tone was angry and determined. Such cold and calculated anger is the worst. Once Frank has got over his excellent win, he's going to have to try and sort out this prickly problem, either favouring Alan or Carlos, before they decide it among themselves. "*Ah, this board story, not a bad one for you journalist, eh?*", joked the Englishman after the race, but his sarcastic tone of voice hid his real embarrassment ...

Eric Bhat and Mike Doodson

WHEN ARNOUX'S EYES ARE SMILLING

René Arnoux sat, bare to the waist, in the Renault team's little caravan. His head was low, his eyes staring blankly into space. When the team's masseur, Jean-Pierre Moreau began to work on his arms and neck, René submitted gratefully to the relaxing massage.

by Eric BHAT

This was Saturday morning at the Jacarepagua circuit, three quarters of an hour before the first unofficial practice session of the day. The scene described above isn't particularly unusual, but it serves as a symbol.

Arnoux, at that time, was only a shadow of himself and of his current position. He lacked confidence, he was unsure of himself. It was almost as though the masseur's attention was a comfort to him, something that made him more secure, and gave him reason for being here, many thousands of miles from his safe refuge at Magny-Cours in the middle of France.

Motor racing, Formula One, isn't that much fun everyday. Here was René in Rio, one of the most beautiful cities of the world, but he wasn't happy. He felt alienated to those around him, his own little world.

Something was going round and round in his head : a question, to which he wanted to answer but couldn't. It was like a hole in him. The more he tried to answer the question, the harder it became. He simply couldn't throw off this problem.

On Wednesday morning — it seemed an age away — everything had begun badly. He'd started off on the wrong foot immediately the Brazilian Grand Prix week had begun. Michelin organised a test session which was just like any other test session before a Grand Prix. Everyone was there, because Michelin were looking after all the teams. It would be an interesting pointer to each team's form for the coming weekend. There were thirty cars there, and René Arnoux was lost in amongst them, very lost. He was down in 21st place, it was a disaster. And Alain Prost made it even worse. Jean-Pierre Jabouille's replacement had been welcomed to the team like a prodigal son, and in two months was already part of the family and respected. And now Prost was living up to his promise. He was second quickest, at the other end of the scale to René. But it wasn't really important as far as René was concerned. It was annoying, that's for sure, because a driver is always vulnerable at times like that. He's there to drive quickly, and he's not happy when he can't manage it. Annoying, yes, but not the end of the world.

Furthermore, it was his first time at Jacarepagua. The previous evening he'd done a few laps in his hire car and realised that he was going to have a little trouble getting this tricky and testing track exactly right. He'd been expecting trouble, and he'd been right. All the same, he was slightly concerned that evening when he went to bed.

Forty-eight hours later, on Friday evening, he was a worried man when he got back to his hotel. He'd relaxed and rested on the Thursday, but when Friday's practice began, there seemed to be precious little progress made between Wednesday's unofficial session and Friday's considerably more important sessions. He was 16th on the provisional grid, and nearly two seconds slower than Prost who was fourth fastest overall.

What was really worrying René was that he didn't know why. Nothing could be worse for a driver than being slow for no apparent reason.

That Friday was awful for René. *"The car's going well"*, he told Gérard Larrousse each time he came into the pits. The mechanics made the odd adjustement here and there, but they were more clutching at straws than working in a particular direction because the driver was unable to be precise as to what was wrong. He simply didn't know and the more it became obvious, the more it worried him.

For lap after lap, in the morning and the afternoon, René just couldn't go any quicker. *" I feel that I'm really having a go, yet when I see the times, they're not quick"*. His determination was ebbing. *"Motivation is allied to performance. If you don't have ene, you can't manage the other. When you feel good, then everything seems possible, you can't be beaten, you're happy and determined. But when you're disappointed with your efforts, then you try and make progress too quickly, you get frustrated, make mistakes, brake too late, slide in the corners. It just makes everything worse "*.

Trapped in this vicious circle, René ended up blaming himself. *" I don't feel on form "*, he confessed to Gérard Larrousse.

Now Larrousse knows the racing game very well. Until recently, of course, he was a pretty fine driver himself. He understands the psychological demands of a driver, and knows that you can't just go out and tell a driver that he's no good, that he must pull himself together. That would damage his self-confidence irrepairably, although in some teams that would be just what would happen. A driver has to be cossetted when he's at his wit's end.

So after practice, Larrousse and René had a little tête-à-tête in the team's caravan. Renault Sport's director reasoned with René, as much to patch up his damaged morale as to reassure himself. *"Now a loss of form might cost you o couple of tenths, but not three whole seconds. I don't think you're off form. It has to be something wrong with the car. We'll check it over, and set it up again, check the suspension, the wings, everything. You'll see, things will be better tomorrow "*.

René would have liked to have believed his team manager, but that would have been too easy. Something inside stopped him. He felt that he was kidding himself, that he was evading the real question. The fact was that the car wasn't going badly at all, it seemed OK.

He simply felt down in the dumps and he put his poor times down to being off form. When he spoke to us, he seemed to be vindicating himself, he'd seemed to have found a reasonable excuse. *" Prost didn't join the team until late this winter. So I did all the testing. I was out nearly every week ; maybe I didn't really ever recover from last season. Man isn't a machine, you know. He has to recharge his batteries at some stage. He can't simply bounce back when he's ordered to "*.

But then came the test. Within three laps, on old tyres, René had equalled his Friday time which had been set on new tyres after a long build-up period. Doubt flew out of the window, questions were answered, confidence restored. *"It immediately felt better'* said René. He was still too wound up to laugh, but he certainly felt relieved. *'The car is a lot easier to drive. I'm not fighting it any longer. I'm enjoying driving it, I feel good"*. Larrousse was obviously right.

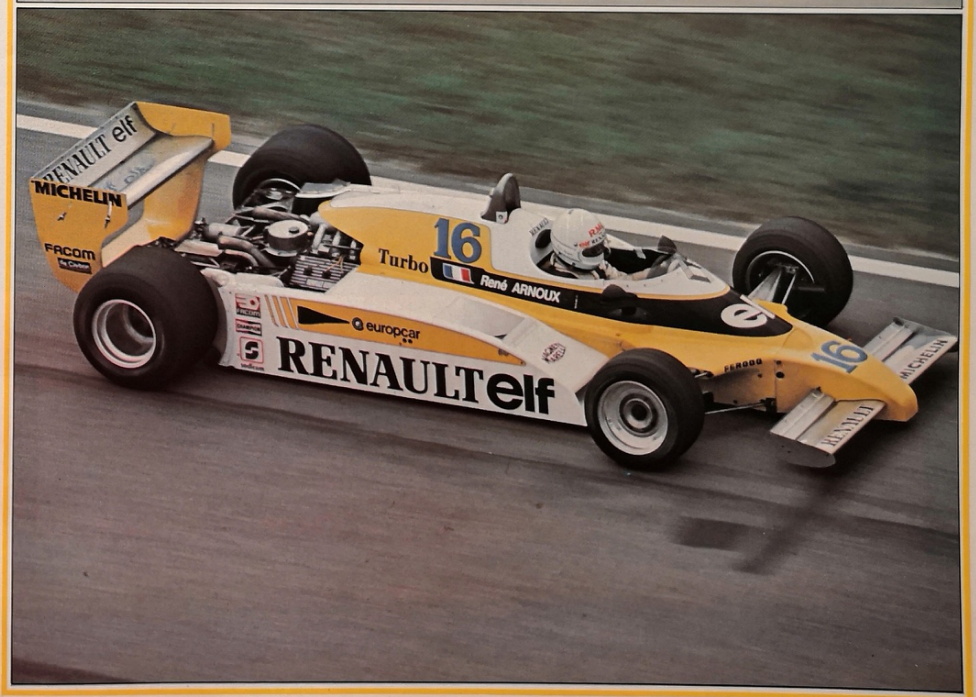
Smiling and confident again, René was determined to redress the balance on the Saturday afternoon. From the sixteenth on the grid, he would try and slot his Renault into one of the first two or three rows. Within four laps of the second session, he'd equalled Prost's time from the previous day.

But then he went off the track, and badly. Unfortunately the car hit a wooden post and it ended his session. *" There, I had an overdose of confidence "*, he smiled. René was confident again, and it had come in a rush ofrelief, obliterating the doubt.

When practice was over, René found himself on the fourth row of the grid. *" But the race is long, and the car's going well on full tanks. I could do pretty well "*. Gone was the doubt, replaced by the same René Arnoux who, a little more than a year ago, won the Brazilian Grand Prix and the South African Grand Prix.

But that race which he expected to be long and hard lasted only a few centimeters. And those centimeters were in the direction of the armco. He did even less than Prost at Long Beach. For a moment he was disappointed, but when he left the circuit after the race, he was calm and relaxed, sure in himself that he'd done his best.

"The strength of a team, he explained that evening, *is the confidence that the various members give one another "*. René didn't really have to say that because he was the living proof of the fact. It hadn't been a pointless weekend in Brazil, because he now knew that he had his team right behind him. □



THE FILM OF THE RACE

It may have been raining, and the circuit at Rio may have been very different to that at Long Beach, but the Brazilian Grand Prix served only to prove that the Long Beach stars were no flukes. The Williams and Patrese were on top again, Reutemann surprising everyone by leading home Jones, while Patrese was a little bit further back. Then came the big surprise : Marc Surer drove a superb race to take fourth place, his little Ensign cocking a snoot at such mega-buck teams as Talbot, McLaren and Lotus. It's been a long time since an Ensign was quite so competitive.

1

1. There's confusion at the start. Arnoux is one of the victims with Andretti and Serra. The Renault ends up in the armco, right where Jean-Pierre Jabouille is watching.

2

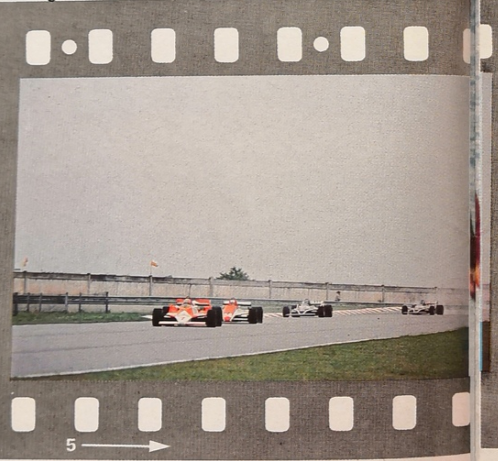
2. Reutemann-Jones : an unrivalled one-two. The order was the same at the finish at it was at the start.

3

3. Riccardo Patrese reckoned that the Williams were uncatchable, so he quietly settled down and headed for an untroubled third place.

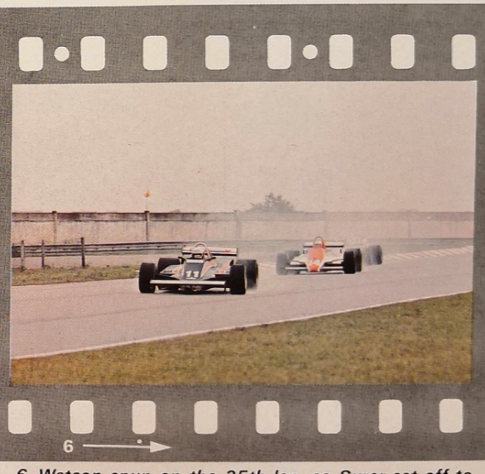
4

4. On the first lap, Surer was only ninth. But the Swiss elevated himself to hero status by forging through to fourth, an excellent position considering his place on the grid.



5

5. He's sixth behind Watson who holds him up for quite a while, while the two Talbots aren't far behind.



6

6. Watson spun on the 35th lap, so Surer set off to catch de Angelis, taking fourth place off the Italian on the 50th lap.

7

7. Carlos Reutemann is surprised to see the chequered flag a lap early, so he covers his final lap at full speed, just in case.

PRACTICE

Carlos Reutemann proved that he was in fine form as early as the first qualifying session when he set fastest time in front of Piquet and teammate Jones, the latter unhappy because of his car's poor roadholding. Prost was fourth quickest, but a whole two seconds slower than the fastest Williams, in front of Patrese, Andretti, Rosberg, Cheever and Rebaque who completed the first ten.

The Talbot-Ligiers were off form again. Laffite was only eleventh and Jabouille 23rd and still suffering trouble with his right leg. Tambay was again competitive with 14th fastest time and appeared to be following his Long Beach form.

The next day during the qualifying session, Piquet bumped Reutemann off pole position, gaining a whole second. Reutemann and Jones, however, didn't improve their times but held onto their second and third fastest times, while Patrese replaced Prost on the second row of the grid. Giacomelli made excellent progress, improving from 13th to sixth on the grid, while Arnoux did just as well to improve from 16th on the grid to eighth. Villeneuve was still in the front half of the grid, while Pironi had trouble and was only 17th.

Zunino made it onto the grid by just three hundredths of a second, excluding Lammers. Joining the ATS driver as spectators were the two Osella drivers Gabbiani and Guerra, and Salazar.

RACE

The track was very wet when the start was given. All the drivers were perfectly aware of the fact after their warm-up laps, but even so, three of them decided to start on slicks, including poleman Nelson Piquet, plus Didier Pironi and Siegfried Stohr.

The two Williams shot off the grid but chaos broke out behind them in the cloud of spray kicked up by 24 high powered machines fighting for traction. Andretti, Arnoux and Serra retired on the spot. Stohr spun and had trouble getting off the grass and back onto the track. Cheever's front suspension was bent and he had to stop at the end of the lap to have it mended.

At the end of the straight Tambay spun, once again because the spray obscured the track.

Reutemann and Jones finished the first lap in that order with Patrese in third place. The order never changed. Jones was never really close enough to attack Reutemann. The latter appeared to ignore his team's orders and crossed the line the winner in front of Alan Jones who was understandably frustrated as he's meant to be team leader. Riccardo Patrese was the only driver to get even close to the Williams, but even he was left behind at the rate of a second a lap during the early stages of the race. But he kept up a steady rhythm in third place and that's where he finished.

If his practice form was anything to go by, Piquet should have been right up there among the leaders, but his tyre choice meant that he dropped further and further back. He was 15th on the first lap, and 17th a lap later. It was only thanks to retirements that he finished in a very disappointing 12th. The battle for fourth place and below was much more lively. At the start of the race it was Giacomelli who lay fourth for three laps but he was soon in electrical trouble, and de Angelis took over fourth. On the tenth lap, the Italian managed to pull away slightly from the battling group behind comprising Rosberg, Watson, Surer, Jarier (who'd shot through the field), Prost and Laffite. The Renault driver was soon to disappear when Pironi's car acquaplaned into him as the Renault lapped the Ferrari.

Rosberg couldn't maintain his pace for long and slowly the Fittipaldi began to drop back. That left a three cornered fight for fifth place between Watson, Surer and Jarier. The latter overtook the Swiss driver on the 15th lap, but then dropped back two places on the 29th.

For a long time it was Watson who held fifth place, driving perfectly and not making the slightest mistake, despite pressure from Surer, Laffite and Jarier. But on the 35th lap, Watson spun and that left the way open for Surer and the two Talbot drivers to begin to haul in de Angelis.

Only Surer succeeded in catching the Lotus, and he swept past on the 50th lap, thus taking fourth place. De Angelis was relegated to fifth but was never troubled by the Talbot drivers. Laffite had electrical trouble and dropped behind his teammate until orders from the pit instructed them to swop places again and Jarier duly obeyed a few minutes before the end. □

EXTRA, EXTRA

RICCARDO PATRESE CONFIRMS IT

Every now and then in racing, a car or driver puts on a good performance, runs competitively, yet leaves a bitter taste because it retires, and it never happens again. Riccardo Patrese's South African Grand Prix in 1978 is an example of this. He was leading until the car broke, and Riccardo wasn't seen among the front runners until nearly three years later, at Long Beach a few weeks ago. But that race ended without a concrete result for the Italian. Would we all have to wait another three years?

The answer was no. Two weeks later, at Rio, Riccardo was on the rostrum. He wasn't on the top step, that's true, as he might have been at Long Beach, but third place is certainly worthwhile.

He qualified on the second row of the grid and latched onto the Williams early on until they began to pull away. From then on he had a lonely race and finished third.

"At least, I've proved practice and race at Long Beach wasn't just a one-off", he sighed after the Rio race. Obviously he was a bit worried about that possibility as well. *"We now have a competitive car and I think it will remain competitive, because the team has a lot of experience".*

Dave Wass, at the same time, has proved that he's a designer in his own right. He's obviously done the right things in developing the Arrows A3. Curiously, his predecessor, Tony Southgate has also had success with the Theodore which built in record time and scored a point on its first outing. With such a pair of obviously talented engineers, one wonders why the Arrows team have spent so long in the shadows without a decent result.

But now they seem to be on their way. *"The main feature of the Arrows is that it's both fast and simple at the same time,"* explains Patrese, *"just like the Williams".* This flattering comparison adequately describes Riccardo's feelings, and he's not afraid to voice them. *"My main aim is to win a Grand Prix. I've finished in every other position but first, so that's what I want now. Then we'll see".*

After that, well, that's another story but Riccardo expects to be fully involved. He all but confirms the fact when talking about the future. *" It's too early to talk about favourites, but at the moment, there are two drivers who are in top form: Carlos Reutemann and Riccardo Patrese".*

Shortly before the Long Beach GP, Nunn reached a good sponsorship agreement involving the Colombian driver Ricardo Londono, who agree to step down for the Californian race to give the team an opportunity to get the car adapted to skirtless specifications with an experienced driver. Londono was in Rio but was unable to drive because his super licence had failed to come through in time. Ironically the news that London's licence had been granted (on the basis of his race results in the American IMSA series) came through on the afternoon after the Brazilian race, when Surer was already looking forward to a second opportunity with the Ensign in Argentina. Efforts were continuing at the little team's Walsall factory to have a second chassis shipped out to Argentina so that both drivers would have an equal opportunity of qualifying.

Surer confesses that he was lucky in Rio. *" Morris asked me before the start to bring the car home in one piece. But there was incredible confusion on the grid with at least two cars sideways in front of me. I just turned hard left and must have done about two hundred yards on the grass before I got back on the track".*

After one lap Surer lay in an encouraging ninth place. Retirements in front of him improved his position to seventh by lap 29, but Surer did not miss the opportunities presented to him by John Watson and Elio de Angelis. *" John was holding me up, but it was extremely difficult to see through his spray".*

With the two Talbot-Ligiers on his own heels, however, Surer had to keep up the pressure, which eventually told on the experienced Irishman. *" He took a wide line round a corner and tried to stay on the throttle,* explained Surer. *He couldn't hold the car though, and I had to brake hard to avoid him as he spun".*

Almost immediately, the Ensign was snapping at the gearbox of Elio de Angelis's fourth placed Lotus. *" It was extremely fast on the straights,* said Surer, *but he made a little mistake too, and I was through. When you've been driving in someone else's spray for as long as I had been doing, you feel so happy to be able to see properly again that you take advantage of it".* Sure enough, Surer's quick lap was the one just after he'd joyfully swept past the spinning Watson.

There was no happier man in the pit lane afterwards than Morris Nunn, hugging his driver with understandable emotion. *" It's the best result my cars have ever had",* said the team owner. Swiss journalists surrounded the two of them, and soon the good news was on its way to Zurich where everyone hopes that it will encourage a sponsor to step forward and save Marc's place in the team.

Mike Doodson

SURER TO THE RESCUE

Wet races almost always produce surprises. Rain, the great leveller, enhances the qualities of a determined and talented driver while, at the same time, it diminishes the handicap of an insufficiently developed or poor chassis. At the Jacarepagua circuit in Rio, the driver who starred in the rain was Switzerland's one time Formula 2 champion, 29-year-old Marc Surer, who set fastest lap of the race en route to a rousing fourth place.

Surer made his F1 debut late in 1979 with Ensign and was later signed up by ATS in preference to Jan Lammers.

Team Ensign, meanwhile, had struck the financial difficulties which eventually forced its owner, former F3 driver Morris Nunn, to put the company into liquidation. With assistance from his fellow members of the Formula One Constructors' Organisation, Nunn was able to purchase the assets of the defunct company, and he was also able to retain the services of Ralph Bellamy and Nigel Bennett, the ex-Lotus personnel who had joined him early in 1980 to design a new car, but without a sponsor, and with cash in short supply, Nunn was forced to make economies which included denying himself the opportunity to see his car race at the first GP of the year in South Africa.

Among the economies, Nunn could not afford a permanent driver. But Surer who had reached agreement with several sports car teams for occasional long distance events, was willing to take a gamble on the team that had entrusted its car to him in 1979. Driving the latest, stiffer version of the Ensign, it was that gamble which paid off for Surer in the very wet Brazilian Grand Prix at Rio. *" Morris was honest with me when he asked me to drive his car",* explained Surer the next afternoon as he snatched a few hours by the pool before catching the plane to Germany for a Formula Two race. *" He told me that he couldn't guarantee a full season for me, only four races in fact. He had a Swiss sponsor who still hasn't paid — and he certainly couldn't afford to give me a retainer. Which is why I'm racing in return for expenses only. But the team has a good engineering base. We also have a fine team of extremely experienced mechanics under Darryl Kincaid who used to be with Mario Andretti at Lotus "*

Rio de Janeiro statistics

BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

Date : March 29, 1981
Circuit length : 3.126 miles
Race distance : 63 laps, 196.974 miles
Conditions : drizzle
Attendance : 40,000 spectators

THE RECORD

(last five races)

1976 : Lauda (Ferrari 312 T)
1977 : Reutemann (Ferrari 312 T2)
1978 : Reutemann (Ferrari 312 T3)
1979 : Laffite (Ligier JS 11)
1980 : Arnoux (Renault RE 20)

STARTING GRID

REUTEMANN Williams FW 07/B 1'35"39	**PIQUET** Brabham BT 49 C 1'35"07
PATRESE Arrows A3 1'36"66	**JONES** Williams FW07/B 1'36"33
GIACOMELLI Alfa Romeo 179 1'37"28	**PROST** Renault RE 20/B 1'36"67
ARNOUX Renault RE 20/B 1'37"56	**VILLENEUVE** Ferrari 126 C/K 1'37"49
DE ANGELIS Lotus 81 1'37"73	**ANDRETTI** Alfa Romeo 179 1'37"59
ROSBERG Fittipaldi F8 1'37"98	**REBAQUE** Brabham BT 49 C 1'37"77
CHEEVER Tyrrell 010 1'38"16	**MANSELL** Lotus 81 1'38"00
LAFFITE Talbot Ligier JS 17 1'38"27	**Watson** McLaren M 29/C 1'38"26
SURER Ensign N 180/B 1'38"57	**PIRONI** Ferrari 126 C/K 1'38"56
DE CESARIS McLaren M 29/C 1'38"78	**TAMBAY** Theodore TY 01 1'38"72
SERRA Fittipaldi F8 1'39"32	**STOHR** Arrows A3 1'39"19
ZUNINO Tyrrell 010 1'39"79	**JARIER** Talbot Ligier JS 17 1'39"39

Non-qualified :
LAMMERS (ATS D/4) 1'39"844
JABOUILLE (Talbot Ligier JS17) 1'40"30
GABBIANI (Osella FA 1/B) 1'40"70
GUERRA (Osella FA 1/B) 1'40"98
SALAZARE (March 811) 1'43"26
DALY (March 811)

TIMES IN UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE

WEDNESDAY MORNING		FRIDAY MORNING		SATURDAY MORNING		SUNDAY MORNING	
Reutemann	1'37"48	Piquet	1'37"11	Piquet	1'35"692	Piquet	1'39"76
Prost	1'38"42	Reutemann	1'37"24	Prost	1'37"833	Jones	1'41"77
Rebaque	1'38"73	Jones	1'38"31	Patrese	1'37"916	De Angelis	1'41"97
Patrese	1'38"96	Villeneuve	1'38"48	Jones	1'38"085	Tambay	1'42"31
De Angelis	1'39"71	De Angelis	1'38"87	Giacomelli	1'38"126	Reutemann	1'42"38
Andretti	1'39"82	Laffite	1'39"21	Villeneuve	1'38"446	Lammers	1'42"58
Laffite	1'39"85	Mansell	1'39"25	Andretti	1'38"700	Villeneuve	1'42"77
Mansell	1'40"01	Andretti	1'39"60	Cheever	1'38"860	Rosberg	1'43"00
Cheever	1'40"30	Rosberg	1'39"62	Laffite	1'38"980	Patrese	1'43"26
Jarier	1'40"40	Tambay	1'40"10	Reutemann	1'38"983	Prost	1'43"30
Lammers	1'40"67	Giacomelli	1'40"26	Mansell	1'39"200	Rebaque	1'43"30
Pironi	1'40"70	Patrese	1'40"42	Arnoux	1'39"241	De Cesaris	1'43"48
De Cesaris	1'41"08	Prost	1'40"59	Tambay	1'39"312	Arnoux	1'43"69
Rosberg	1'41"20	Arnoux	1'40"68	Pironi	1'39"337	Surer	1'43"84
Tambay	1'41"25	Rebaque	1'40"83	De Angelis	1'39"650	Jarier	1'44"28
Watson	1'41"45	Surer	1'41"00	Watson	1'39"814	Mansell	1'44"41
Jones	1'41"46	Cheever	1'41"10	Rosberg	1'39"956	Watson	1'44"57
Villeneuve	1'41"71	Pironi	1'41"10	Stohr	1'39"985	Cheever	1'46"09
Surer	1'41"77	Guerra	1'41"31	De Cesaris	1'40"015	Stohr	1'46"56
Piquet	1'42"01	De Cesaris	1'41"51	Serra	1'40"245	Zunino	1'48"74
Arnoux	1'42"08	Zunino	1'41"72	Rebaque	1'40"561	Laffite	1'50"07
Daly	1'42"32	Stohr	1'41"84	Lammers	1'41"075	Giacomelli	1'51"59
Giacomelli	1'42"36	Lammers	1'41"97	Zunino	1'41"799	Andretti	1'52"21
Serra	1'42"45	Serra	1'42"34	Jabouille	1'43"318	Pironi	2'00"09
Guerra	1'42"84	Watson	1'42"60	Gabbiani	1'44"224	Serra	2'00"13
Jabouille	1'43 05	Gabbiani	1'42"68	Salazar	1'44"246		
Stohr	1'43"11	Jabouille	1'42"68	Surer	1'47"169		
Gabbiani	1'43"64	Daly	1'44"03				
Zunino	1'44"55	Salazar	1'48"32				
Salazar	1'46"35						

THEIR FASTEST RACE LAPS

	Time	Lap n°
Surer	1'54"30	36
Laffite	1'54"50	37
Piquet	1'54"67	31
Reutemann	1'54"78	61
Jones	1'55"21	54
Jarier	1'55"85	38
Patrese	1'56"10	9
De Angelis	1'56"27	46
Tambay	1'56"71	15
Giacomelli	1'56"73	40
Watson	1'56"95	29
Mansell	1'57"12	10
Prost	1'57"12	14
Rebaque	1'57"27	14
Rosberg	1'57"34	8
Villeneuve	1'57"42	8
De Cesaris	1'58"87	7
Cheever	1'59"19	34
Pironi	2'00"44	15
Stohr	2'03"42	12

TIMES IN OFFICIAL PRACTICE

	1st session	2cnd session
Piquet	1'35"786	**1'35"079**
Reutemann	**1'35"390**	1'36"000
Jones	**1'36"337**	1'36"690
Patrese	1'37"231	**1'36"667**
Prost	1'37"147	**1'36"670**
Giacomelli	1'38"682	**1'37"283**
Villeneuve	1'37"975	**1'37"497**
Arnoux	1'38"985	**1'37"561**
Andretti	1'37"933	**1'37"597**
De Angelis	1'38"352	**1'37"734**
Rebaque	1'38"225	**1'37"777**
Rosberg	**1'37"981**	1'39"371
Mansell	1'38"861	**1'38"003**
Cheever	**1'38"160**	1'38"521
Watson	1'40"057	**1'38"263**
Laffite	**1'38"273**	1'38"713
Pironi	1'39"229	**1'38"565**
Surer	1'39"296	**1'38"570**
Tambay	**1'38"726**	1'39"668
De Cesaris	1'39"409	**1'38"780**
Stohr	1'40"297	**1'39"190**
Serra	**1'39"326**	1'39"396
Jarier	—	**1'39"398**
Zunino	1'41"036	**1'39"798**
Lammers	1'40"339	**1'39"844**
Jabouille	**1'40"306**	—
Gabbiani	1'41"954	**1'40"709**
Guerra	**1'40"984**	1'44"482
Salazar	1'44"730	**1'43"267**

PROVISIONAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATION

1. Jones and Reutemann 15 pts - **3.** Patrese and Piquet 4 pts - **5.** Andretti and Surer 3 pts - **7.** Cheever and De Angelis 2 pts - **9.** Tambay and Laffite 1 pt.

CONSTRUCTORS CUP

1. Williams 30 pts - **2.** Brabham and Arrows 4 pts - **4.** Alfa Romeo and Ensign 3 pts - **6.** Tyrrell and Lotus 2 pts - **8.** Theodore and Talbot Ligier 1 pt.

RESULTS

1. REUTEMANN	Williams FW07/B	62 laps in 2h00'32"66 (96.312 mph)
2. JONES	Williams FW07/B	4"43 behind
3. PATRESE	Arrows A3	1'03"07 behind
4. SURER	Ensign N180/B	1'17"03 behind
5. DE ANGELIS	Lotus 81	1'26"41 behind
6. LAFFITE	Talbot Ligier JS17	1'26"82 behind
7. JARIER	Talbot Ligier JS17	1'30"25 behind
8. WATSON	McLaren M29/C	one lap behind
9. ROSBERG	Fittipaldi F8	one lap behind
10. TAMBAY	Theodore TY01	one lap behind
11. MANSELL	Lotus 81	one lap behind
12. PIQUET	Brabham BT49/C	two laps behind
13. ZUNINO	Tyrrell 010	four laps behind

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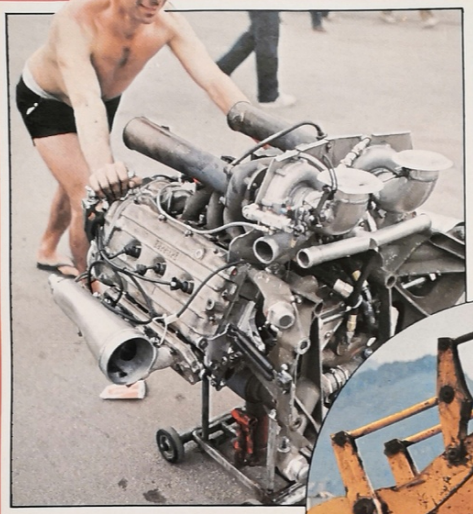
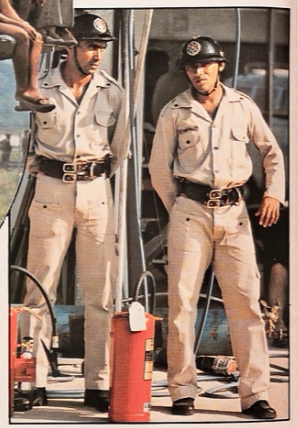
Postcard from Rio de Janeiro



It's got four wheels, a turbo engine, a driver, but no chassis: perhaps Chapman could lend one, he seems to have one too many.

A Concours d'Elegance was organised during the Grand Prix, but not for boring old cars.



They use scaffolding at Monza, motorhomes at Long Beach and Watkins Glen, smart apartments at Monaco, and earthmovers at Rio. Each to his own.

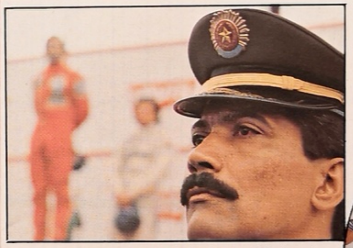
The only way to be introduced to this beauty is to fall ill. She's a nurse.

After a strenuous day at the circuit (see photo elsewhere), Jacques Laffite relaxes with his clubs and balls.

Uniforms, helmets, truncheons, the police control things by force, there are enough of them. They not only refused photographers access to the rostrum, they virtually prevented the drivers from getting onto the traditional winners' seat.

There's an awful lot of coffee in Brazil, and you can buy it anywhere.

"Gerard, I've got one or two things to do. Could Jarier practice my car as well?"

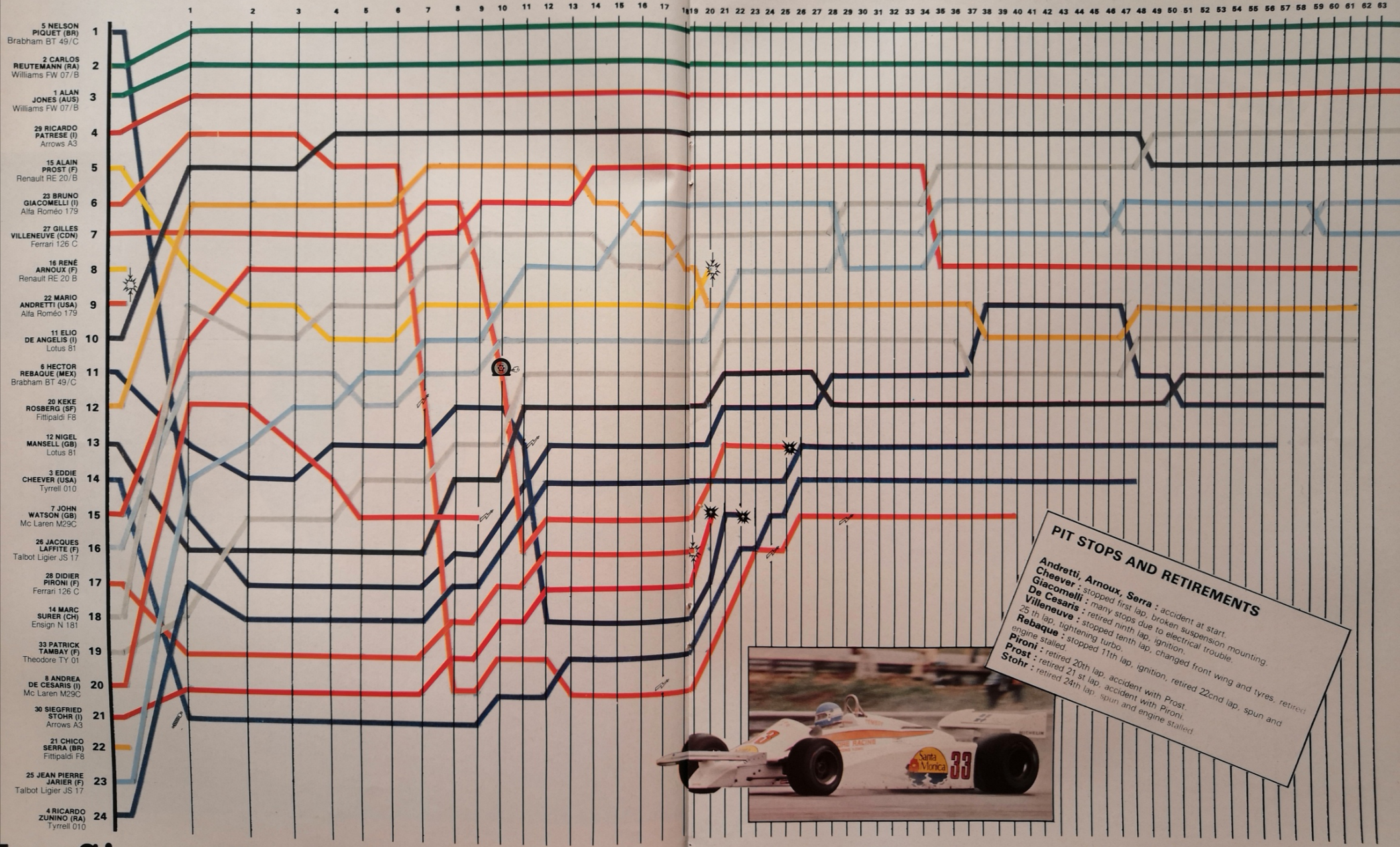


Brabham protested the Lotus 88, but it was rather hypocritical as they've already built their own, very attractive twin-chassised vehicle.

He may be dressed as a footballer, but he looks rather unfit. Our technical editor Giorgio Piola shows what he thinks of editor Eric Bhat.

Our photographic friends, Eric Vargiolu and Harald Strebelle. Cheer up, you can get back to the pool soon.

Lap by lap - Giro per giro - Runde um Runde - Tour par tour - Vuelta a vuelta - Ronde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5 NELSON PIQUET (BR) Brabham BT 49/C 1
2 CARLOS REUTEMANN (RA) Williams FW 07/B 2
1 ALAN JONES (AUS) Williams FW 07/B 3
29 RICARDO PATRESE (I) Arrows A3 4
15 ALAIN PROST (F) Renault RE 20/B 5
23 BRUNO GIACOMELLI (I) Alfa Roméo 179 6
27 GILLES VILLENEUVE (CDN) Ferrari 126 C 7
16 RENÉ ARNOUX (F) Renault RE 20 B 8
22 MARIO ANDRETTI (USA) Alfa Roméo 179 9
11 ELIO DE ANGELIS (I) Lotus 81 10
6 HECTOR REBAQUE (MEX) Brabham BT 49/C 11
20 KEKE ROSBERG (SF) Fittipaldi F8 12
12 NIGEL MANSELL (GB) Lotus 81 13
3 EDDIE CHEEVER (USA) Tyrrell 010 14
7 JOHN WATSON (GB) Mc Laren M29C 15
26 JACQUES LAFFITE (F) Talbot Ligier JS 17 16
28 DIDIER PIRONI (F) Ferrari 126 C 17
14 MARC SURER (CH) Ensign N 181 18
33 PATRICK TAMBAY (F) Theodore TY 01 19
8 ANDREA DE CESARIS (I) Mc Laren M29C 20
30 SIEGFRIED STOHR (I) Arrows A3 21
21 CHICO SERRA (BR) Fittipaldi F8 22
25 JEAN PIERRE JARIER (F) Talbot Ligier JS 17 23
4 RICARDO ZUNINO (RA) Tyrrell 010 24

PIT STOPS AND RETIREMENTS

Andretti, Arnoux, Serra : accident at start.
Cheever : stopped first lap, broken suspension mounting.
Giacomelli : many stops due to electrical trouble.
De Cesaris : retired ninth lap, ignition.
Villeneuve : stopped tenth lap, changed front wing and tyres, retired 25 th lap, tightening turbo.
Rebaque : stopped 11th lap, ignition, retired 22cnd lap, spun and engine stalled.
Pironi : retired 20th lap, accident with Prost.
Prost : retired 21 st lap, accident with Pironi.
Stohr : retired 24th lap, spun and engine stalled.

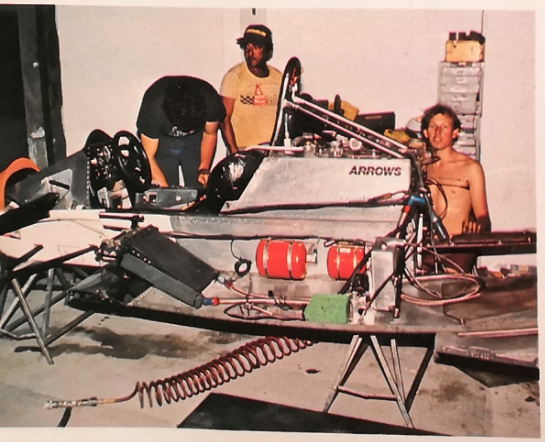
Lap - Giro per giro - Runde um Runde - Tour par tour - Vuelta a vuelta - Ronde na rond

WATER EVERYWHERE

It wasn't one of those tropical rainstorms which soaks everything and leaves inches of water everywhere. It was more a drizzle, enough to make the track wet.

Everyone was on wet tyres, or nearly everyone. Piquet decided to go for slicks as did Pironi and Stohr, but then they didn't have as much to lose as Piquet so their gamble was more understandable.
So both Williams, Patrese, Giacomelli and de Angelis emerge from the cloud of spray. Piquet hasn't any grip and drops back. Further back, there's chaos. Villeneuve hits Prost and bends his Ferrari's front wing. Andretti and Arnoux collide and go no further. Watson and Surer take avoiding action on the slippery grass. Serra hits Prost's stationery Renault, and Stohr spins in order to miss the Fittipaldi. That's the sort of havoc a wet race causes. (Photos DPPI - Bernard Asset/A+P).

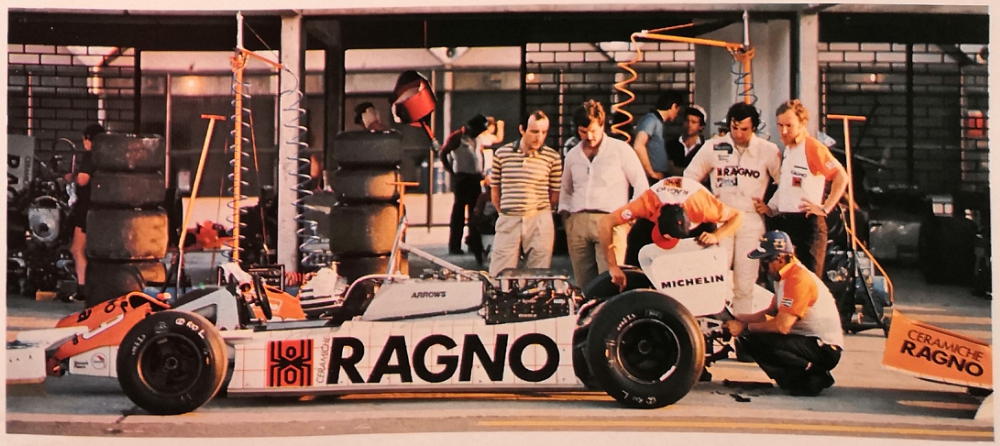
VIVA ARROWS



Some wits like to call the Ragno-sponsored Arrows the bathroom on wheels because of the tile effect painted on the cars. They may joke about them, but after Patrese's promise shown at Long Beach, he confirmed it at Rio in the Arrows A3. He was competitive in practice, and did well in the race.

– I might have been able to follow the Williams during the race, and might even have overtaken them. But it's all rather academic, because I would have had to take considerable risks. The track was very wet. And I'd never finished a race in the wet before. So I wanted to maintain my own rythm and keep perfect control of the car in order to finish and finish well. It was absolutely essential as far as I was concerned. –

Riccardo drove that perfect race, without making the slightest mistake. He finished well up, showing that both he and the car have made good progress. However, now he's got to win his first race. (Photos Bernard Asset/A+P).



SUPER SURER

It may have been desperation, but something pushed Marc Surer to drive the race of his life in Brazil, a race that not only ensures his Formula One future for a few races to come, but also allows the Ensign team to look ahead to happier days. Surer's performance was a fine mixture of consistency, attack, bravery and safe on-the-limit driving.

Surer was tenth on the second lap, and then overtook the following : Prost, Villeneuve, Rosberg, Jarier, Watson and de Angelis, not a bad selection of drivers, and the Swiss driver finished a superb fourth. « Well done Marc, that was a fantastic race, » said his ex-team manager, Jo Ramirez of ATS. As for Mo Nunn, the Ensign boss, he was over the moon. « I wanted just one point in the championship and you've won three. » But the English team manager was still as practical as ever. « At least you won't have to pre-qualify at Monaco. » Marc wasn't looking that far ahead. He was still enjoying the feeling of finishing fourth. (Photos Bernard Asset/A-P).

LAFFITE SAVES TALBOT DAY

In 1979 at Interlagos, the Ligiers scored a memorable one-two. A year later, they were the only cars capable of worrying the Renaults. But this time, the Talbot-Ligiers were no longer in the front line. « We still have a lot to learn about our new cars, » said Gerard Ducarouge. Jabouille explained it differently. « There are a lot of things wrong. We've got to get it right before the European season begins. » Jean-Pierre was still suffering from his Montreal injuries, and handed over his car to Jean-Pierre Jarier. The latter qualified on the back row in just one session, and then climbed through the field to sixth place, in front of Laffite whose ignition was playing up. The Ligier team hung out a signal to Jarier for him to drop behind Laffite who consequently scored his first World Championship point. (Photos Bernard Asset / A + P).

DIDIER PIRONI

Didier Pironi is now in his fourth season of Formula One, and he naturally hopes that it's going to be his best. He made his debut in the Tyrrell team, but felt that he was under-estimated and wanted to show what he could really do. So he moved to Ligier but was disappointed with his compatriots. He felt misunderstood. But if nothing else, his experience in three years served him well, for at the end of last year he was signed to drive for Ferrari. Now he has what is probably the best support in Formula One, and probably the best technical men behind him. He has the technical and psychological advantages to make him World Champion. Now it's up to him, and he knows it.

by Eric BHAT

Obviously you've never felt so good within a team. Are there occasions when you regret leaving Ligier?
Yes, I feel that I would have liked to have stayed on occasions, but only when I see a Ligier in front of me. So I'm not really sorry. Anyway, I rarely regret the decisions I make. But there's been one thing I notice in particular. That's that the French press are scarcely interested in me any longer. I suppose that's only to be expected. They almost treat me as a foreigner now. But the Italian press almost make up for that, although I feel more French than Italian. All the same, I'm sorry about that.

You're been fairly critical about Ligier in the past. Has your criticism been directed at the team or the man?
Both, you can't disassociate the man from the team. I got on very well with nearly everyone in the team, but I must say that I was very disappointed by Guy's actions last year. I had one or two little problems on which I needed help, and that help would come from Guy. I would be able to judge the man on his reaction to my call for help, and I was disappointed. As it happened, he gave me his word on one or two things, and he ended up by doing the opposite. It's very disappointing when you're relying on someone responsible.

But you got your own back. Didn't you do the same thing to him? Surely you gave him your verbal consent to drive for him next year, and then changed your mind. Doesn't a promise mean anything in Formula One?
I never verbally agreed to drive for Guy. I simply said that I would drive for him if certain conditions were met. They weren't met so I left. I certainly didn't go against my word. That's absolutely wrong.

What were these conditions?
I wanted to be on equal footing with Jacques Laffite. That means an equal car, the same money, and more than anything, the same psychological backing. It was the third point that I felt was most important, and I wasn't satisfied that it would be met. Maybe that's been good or maybe bad, but life's like that.

Do you think that the Ligier team are capable of winning the World Championship next year?
I think so, yes. But having said that, we had a number of little problems last year, including one of money. With more finance, we could have got ourselves out of trouble on occasions. There were times when we'd found a solution to a problem and were able to improve the cars, but we couldn't take the cars to the circuits to test modifications because we didn't have the money.

You've joined Ferrari, and now you're testing not only the turbo engine but also the Comprex engine. So there are quite a number of new factors to deal with at the same time. This shows Ferrari's capabilities, but isn't it also rather confusing for you?

At Ferrari, one does what one thinks is right. I think that it's the right course of action to develop two engines at the same time because we're not certain which will turn out the better. We haven't reached the maximum of their potential yet, that's for certain. Ferrari are able to develop these two engines at the same time because they have both the financial means and the people to do so, so I don't think that you can talk about being confused. Everyone can see that our turbo engine is already running really well, at least as good as Renault's. So we've already done something positive.

Are you surprised that the engine is running as well as Renault's so soon?
No. During the winter, it was clear during testing that the engine was fantastic. Quite early on I thought, and said, that if we were to have problems this year, they wouldn't come from the engine. The Ferrari team has always produced good engines. Forghieri is the man who takes most of the decisions within the team, and as far as I'm concerned, he's one of the most talented men in Formula One, and particularly engines when it comes to motor sport in general. I've been amazed to see the modifications that he's made to the engine, the speed at which they've been made, and yet they're nearly always positive. When you compare the team to others, you wonder what problems they can really have. With us, it all seems so simple, so obvious. I really believe that it's Ferrari's strong point.

→

Now what about the myth that Ferrari drivers are very well paid ?
You've said it, it's a myth.

You're now in your fourth season of Formula One. You've reached a certain standard, and you've won a Grand Prix, but you don't give the impression of still being eager to finish off the job and win the championship.
There's still a lot to do, of course, because as far as I'm concerned, the only thing that interests me in Formula One is the World Championship. So I've a lot to do. But I've been to school and graduated, I think. I was experienced enough to be World Champion last year. But from now on, every year is one that won't be totally indispensable.

Say we had to fix a date, would it be 1982 ? Might not 1981 seem a little early ?
No, I don't think so. I think the cars are going to go really well after the first three Grands Prix. I'm not too pessimistic about the possibility of being World Champion this year.

You've only just completed your first Grand Prix for the Ferrari team, yet you seem perfectly at ease with them as though you've been racing with them all your life. Why is this ?
Well, it's the third team that I've driven for, and joining them has been completely unlike joining either of the other two. By the time the first Grand Prix was run, I knew the car, engine and the team that was working on them, because we've done so much work together. I don't think Ferrari have ever done so much testing before the season has started as we have this year. But that's because nearly everything is new : the car, the engine, the regulations. To that you have to add the fact that they want to get back on top again. For this reason we've been testing virtually every week.

Does it give you tremendous confidence seeing your team working so hard around you ?
More than that. I feel that everyone's work within the team encourages everyone else. I'm sure that I'm motivated by this fact because I'm not simply working for myself. When things go well, I feel that it pleases everyone. Working with people who are motivated by their work, by racing and by the Ferrari name is of great psychological importance. One never ever feels the slightest bit ignored or forgotten. I feel as though I've just found out what professionalism means. I've never experienced anything like it, and I don't think I would feel the same in another team.

You talk of professionalism, but taking this further, don't you think it's rather restrictive to test so much during the off-season ?
No. You see you don't really tire yourself in testing, because you do very few laps at a time and you can relax when you want. There isn't the cut and thrust of an hour's qualifying at a Grand Prix. What is tiring is this current period with lots of Grands Prix and testing in between races. There's a lot of travelling and different atmospheres, which is psychologically exhausting. Actually I think winter testing is almost beneficial, not restrictive, because it means that one is quite used to driving and in form for the first Grands Prix.

You seem to be able to adapt well enough to the technical demands of Grand Prix racing as well as the competitive demands. Are you as happy at Fiorano as you are at a Grand Prix ?
They're two different things really. A Grand Prix is much more intense. But I like going to Fiorano. It's not a chore at all. I like to go there because that's where I find that the car has been modified, I can talk to the engineers about what they're doing to the car to make it quicker. It's a marvellous facility and I like working there ; our work is always in the right direction. We make progress on each visit. I like going there, and the proof is that every time I go, I get there very quickly !

Surely another advantage is that it speeds up your own working knowledge of the team and the people you work with ?
That's true. I feel as though I've been with Ferrari for a long time already. I know every part of the team, even how each individual works. I like the atmosphere at Fiorano, it's very much a family atmosphere, reminding me a little of the small team that I formed around me when I was racing in Formula Renault Europe. It was almost a little family, and everyone felt that they were perfectly at home. On a rather larger scale, the same is true at Fiorano.

Were you accepted by the team immediately ?
Yes, immediately, but then I don't think it would take any driver long to be accepted by the team members of Ferrari. Each person knows his place and doesn't over-reach himself. As a new Ferrari driver, one is completely organised so that one knows exactly what one has to do when to do it, and to whom one has to speak. It makes things a lot easier. Even after a whole year with Ligier or Tyrrell, I still didn't know who to speak to if I had certain problems. But it's completely different at Ferrari. Once again, that's professionalism.

Apart from driving, how can a driver make his presence felt and take things into his own hands at Ferrari ? How much do people listen to you ?
Well, one can do quite a lot with the Ferrari team, even though the engineers are very competent and there are a lot of them. Unlike my former teams, the team manager at Ferrari, Forghieri, has confidence in his drivers. He's always been the same. A driver feels that he has the responsibility of setting up the car, and interpreting its reactions. It increases the motivation, although one is a little apprehensive. Each time you say something, you're really a little worried you might have got it wrong. They do listen to their drivers, and the people who are listening are very competent.

Are you saying that Mauro Forghieri delegates more responsibility, to his drivers than some of the other team managers ?
I don't know that delegates is the right word, shall we say shares his responsibility. But anyway, it's always like that in motor racing. An engineer can't set up a car by himself, and nor can a driver, because it's too technical and far too complicated. There are too many factors involved. These days you can't be a superb technician who is qualified to design and build a car, and a superb driver who is fit and talented. It's all too specialised. But I do think that Forghieri has found the right way to work at Ferrari ; responsibilities are shared out and it works well.

Mauro Forghieri is often maligned. You've said that during the winter you've been very impressed with his enthusiasm. But don't you think sometimes, that he's almost overenthusiastic ?
He has his excesses, yes, but the only disadvantage is that he lacks objectivity. That's because he loves the sport. He wants things to be right so badly that he wills them to go well with his own enthusiasm. He sometimes forgets to find out why things aren't going right. But when one is aware of this, I don't think it becomes a handicap. On the contrary in fact, it tends to boost morale. Such enthusiasm occasionally has its drawbacks, but generally speaking, his plus points far outweigh such minus points.

And how do you get on with Gilles Villeneuve ? They say that you're partners in crime... even in cars...
(A burst of laughter). It's quite a pleasant surprise for me to be in the same team as a driver who is of the same generation as myself. This wasn't the case in the last two teams I was in. Gilles and I feel the same about certain things. In some ways we have the same views on life, on motor racing. We react similarly as professionals. We made our Formula One debuts around the same time, and learnt the same things at the same time. And we enjoy doing the same things in cars or other high-powered machines. We're as crazy as one another. Yes, I get on very well with Gilles and agree with him over a number of things.

Jody Scheckter used to say that he'd never worked with another driver quite so openly. Would you agree ?
Gilles is marvellous because he's very sincere and spontaneous. When you speak to him about adjustments to the car or something like that you feel that his replies are so spontaneous that they're exactly what he's thinking. That's excellent because it eliminates any doubt about what he's saying from the word go. It's the truth, he's not simply trying to mislead me.

Have you then found that other teammates have misled you ? Have you misled them ?
Ever since my first drive in Formula One, I've had these sort of problems. I'm not going to mention any names because there's no point, but I've had teammates in whom I've had restricted confidence. On the other hand, I've developed the same attitude. And after a while, you arrive at stalemate. If someone takes you for a fool and starts leading you up the garden path, there's no reason why you shouldn't do the same to him. You have to be treat your fellow humans kindly in this life, but sometimes there's a limit. But that problem simply doesn't exist between Gilles and I. We have to be professional and when one is professional, when one sets up a car, even the slightest thing, one has to say what one thinks. Frankly, we work together as a team, for a team. □

Nelson relaxes with a coconut and his girlfriend Sylvia ; relaxation before his local Grand Prix.

SKATING IN RIO

Nelson was the hero of his home Grand Prix. He's become the National idol in two years.

There are various old wives tales and country fables as to how to forcast weather : cows lying down, a wind from this direction or that, frogs (the animals) climbing up walls. However, even in his own country, Nelson Piquet seems unaware of such simple methodes of telling what the weather will do next. Before the race, Nelson was certain that the grey skies were going to clear, and that slicks would be right for the race. But the Gods weren't with him, and the rain persisted, leaving Nelson to flounder at the back of the field on his slick tyres, skating on the wet track.

by Eric BHAT

The aquiline nose was familiar, the dark eyes too, of the man who walked around the Brabham pit. But the features were a little less sharp than Nelson Piquet's, this man seemed a little older, and the hair was a little greyer. All the same, there was a considerable likeness. That wasn't surprising, for a colleague revealed that this was Nelson Piquet's cousin. It was quite easy to compare him with the younger racing driver. Nelson's cousin proudly wore a Nelson Piquet tee-shirt. But then so did many other spectators. This was Nelson's country, where the oranges are as big as grapefruit. There was more proof in the grandstand that this was Brazil. Nearly all the spectators at this Wednesday test session were grouped in the stand directly opposite the Brabham pit. They weren't going to miss à glimpse of their favourite.

For the first time in his Grand Prix career, Nelson was racing in his home Grand Prix as the favourite and hero. In the past he has been the youngster,

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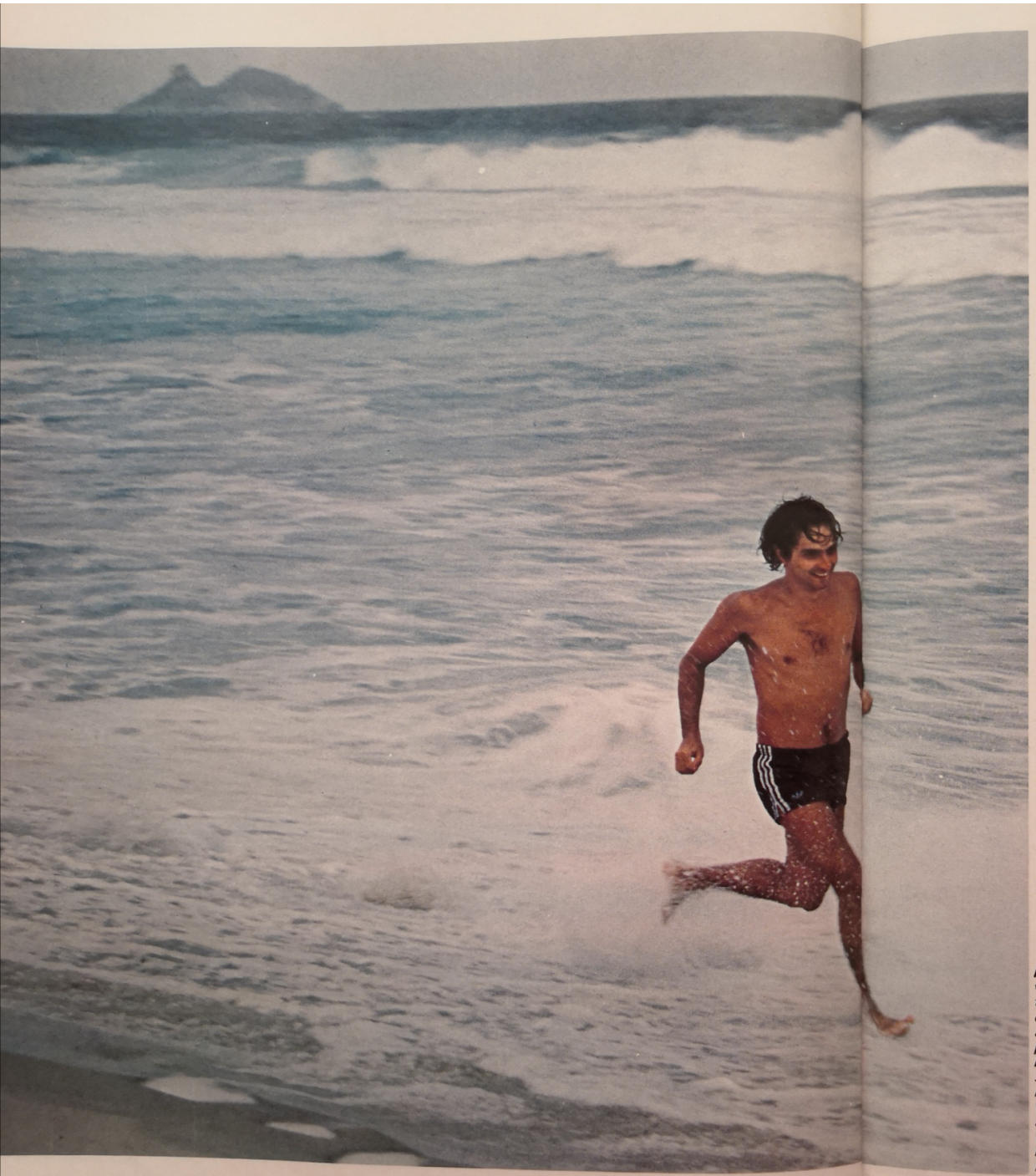


Piquet made the wrong choice of tyres which deprived him of a possible and probably win. But if it had stopped raining, he would have won his gamble and everyone would have hailed him as being brilliant.

Emerson Fittipaldi was the favourite. But with the latter's retirement, and Nelson's exciting championship battle with Alan Jones last year, he has been elevated to hero status, a local who could beat the world. From the beginning of Grand Prix week, the Brazilian press were busy revealing everything they could about the man that every Brazilian hoped would win Sunday's Grand Prix.

How did this publicity affect him? He's a fairly shy, intense person and being in the limelight could well cause him to withdraw. Some observers felt that he was more nervous than usual, but in general it was felt that he went along with all the fuss made of him, sharing the publicity and media with his work without either interfering with the other. He gave interviews, explained how his car handled to his friends, spending lots of time with the people he sees once a year. Although there were security guards at the entrance to the pit, Nelson was never alone. As a Brazilian at home, he seemed relaxed and unconcerned.

But occasionally he seemed a little nervous, and that wasn't because his public expected so much of him. There were other reasons, allied to one simple novelty: Brabham's hydraulic suspension. It raised the hopes of the Brabham men, but caused the other teams to be suspicous. Both reactions affected Piquet's practice.

"*It isn't really anything new,* said Gordon Murray, *I haven't invented it. All the Citroens are fitted with this type of suspension. The reason that I can get away with it is that the regulations lack precision. That's not my fault. I've been saying that for months. The regulations proposed by the designers haven't been adopted. But they were clear and precise. I've always said that designers and engineers should draw up regulations because they know what they're talking about*".

Quite simply, the BT49 is fitted with this hydraulic suspension that raises the car six centimeters above the ground — as per the regulations — when it is stationery in the pits, and then can be lowered that six centimeters once it is out on the track. No one has yet found a scrutineer who can run fast enough to find it illegal. With the suspension lowered, the car once again has full ground effect. "*I can't think why the constructors who supported FISA haven't thought about a similar system. They've spent a lot more time than us working on cars without skirts as well*", said Gordon Murray.

The system hadn't been competitive at Long Beach, but it reappeared on the Brabhams at Rio. On Friday morning, Nelson set fastest time, but had to give best to Reutemann during the afternoon's first qualifying session. This didn't upset Murray, he knew that he still had a chance of improving the BT49's handling and the next day, he proved it when Piquet was fastest. The other teams weren't so happy though, as they watched the Brabham side pods rubbing against the ground as though it was fitted with skirts.

From that moment on, Piquet wasn't worried. He was confident that Murray had the situation under control. The South African designer reassured his driver: "*They may not be happy, but they haven't protested the car, and I don't think they're going to*".

At the end of the session, Murray leaned into his driver's cockpit and told him, "*that's it, it's over. Tomorrow, you're going to do even better*". The happy Brazilian took his designer's bearded face between his driving gloves and played with him like a bear. Piquet was calm and relaxed, he and his designer were confident.

Murray's prediction was right. Nelson was fastest again during the warm-up, a whole two seconds quicker than Jones.

Nelson Piquet had all but won the race. And that's when he lost it.

It had been drizzling for nearly an hour, and the track was soaked. Nelson had an idea. As Gordon Murray wasn't on the summy grid, Nelson took the initiative and asked the mechanics to fit slicks. "*You're crazy, it's got to be wets,* Bernie Ecclestone told him. *I've spoken to some of the locals and they say it's going to continue raining*".

"*No, no, it's going to stop in three minutes*".

Ecclestone shrugged. "*We've lost this one*", he murmured just before the race began.

It carried on raining, virtually without stopping and Nelson Piquet lost his bet. If he'd had wet tyres like his main rivals, the story would have been different. "*He'd be a second and a half quicker than the rest if the warm-up is anything to go by*", reckoned Murray, especially considering the clear track in front of Piquet. "*What a stupid mistake,* mourned the designer, *you can do that when you're 18th on the grid, but when you're on pole, it's a ridiculous risk*".

Fifteen minutes after the start of the race, a sour-faced Murray left the circuit to catch Concorde.

Nelson did the whole race on slicks, soon realising that his gamble hadn't paid off. The other teams, seeing this, joked about it. "*He's not coming in to change tyres because he'd have to slow down so much so as not to fly off the track with the suspension raised that he'd lose too much time*".

"*It's a great shame,*" concluded Murray. "*We're ahead on suspension development and now we've missed out on an easy win. It could happen again at Buenos Aires, but by then everyone will have copied us and we won't have the same advantage any longer*".

Piquet was a disappointed, upset and angry man on Sunday night. It was as though the sky had fallen in on him. □

THE SEARCH FOR LOST GROUND EFFECT

Skirts were banned in order to slow down the cars when they were cornering, because the aerodynamic downforce would be diminished and would therefore lessen the ground effect. But as usual in Formula One, there are people who are cleverer than others and who are capable of turning a situation to suit themselves. The Lotus affair began in Long Beach, but already rumours circulated concerning other cars, stirring up doubts concerning their legality. When there are no skirts, suspensions are softer and that's not necessarily a good thing.

by Giorgio PIOLA

FISA's technical regulations insist that a car must have six centimeters of ground clearance when it is stationary, and that it shouldn't frequently touch the ground once it's moving. But at Rio the Brabham's side pods frequently touched the ground, and one wonders whether it was touching the ground more frequently than the regulations would allow. When it stopped in the pits, the six centimeter rule wasn't always respected either. The team was well aware of this, and after a while, the car was raised up on a quick-lift jack every time it pitted even if it was just for tyre temperatures to be taken, that way the marshals couldn't check the ride height.

Many of the other team managers reckoned that the Brabham was illegal because of its hydraulic suspension. The hydraulic suspension itself certainly isn't against the rules, there's no regulation to say that hydraulic suspension nor variable suspension is illegal. However, some people feel that because of the considerable advantage obtained by ground effect, it's necessary to apply both the six centimeter rule and the rule saying that the car mustn't consistently touch the ground. Most designers say that the Brabham wouldn't be legal if the rules were applied together.

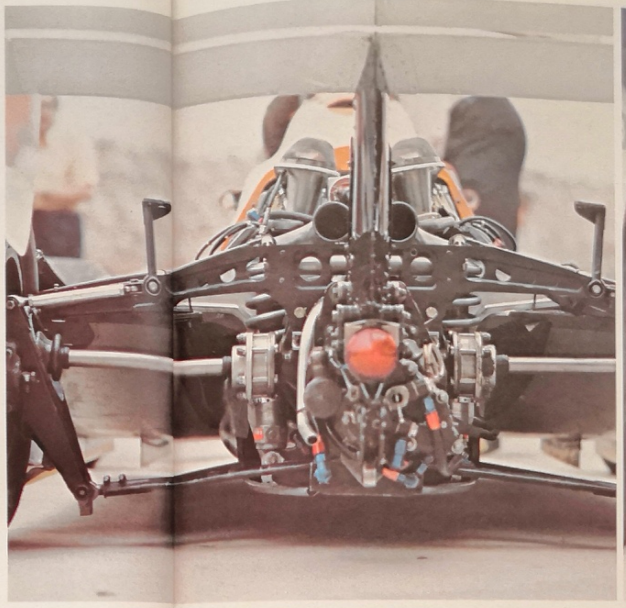
One thing is certain though. Everyone is trying to make their suspensions as soft as possible, something that is quite evident when looking at the cars from the back. One can see that the central part of the car — the chassis and gearbox — is much higher than usual, and the suspension arms are much more inclined than normal. But when the car rolls, the suspension arms take on a more familiar look. The central part of the car is as high off the ground as usual, but the side pods roll over to touch the ground which improves the ground effect. So even though the side pods have a clearance of six centimeters when the car is stationary, it doesn't necessarily mean that this is the case out on the track. This is particularly noticeable on both the Brabham BT49 and the Arrows A3.

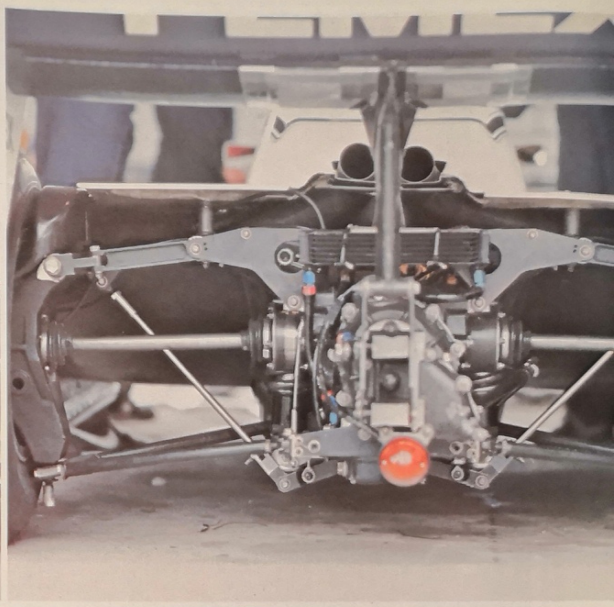
It was quite easy to see what was going on by watching the Brabham's rear brake air scoops. When the car was stationary, the bodywork masked the scoops, but once it was moving, the bodywork lowered and the scoops reappeared.

Jean-Pierre Jarier was a spectator for most of the weekend and he could tell that the Arrows' springs were very soft which allowed the car to be pushed into the track by down force. However, it also made the car rather difficult to drive.

It was also quite apparent that the rubbing strips on the side pods of the Brabham were made out of flexible material, as though Gordon Murray was aware that this part of the car would touch the ground. However, the Modena agreement says that this part of the bodywork has to made from rigid material.

Even so, the Brabham team appear to have been able to get round that. Now every single team is basically going to have to do the same thing. Williams have been the first to react. On Wednesday at Rio, Alan Jones tried a system using gas-filled shock absorbers which allowed the car to be lowered above a certain speed. □





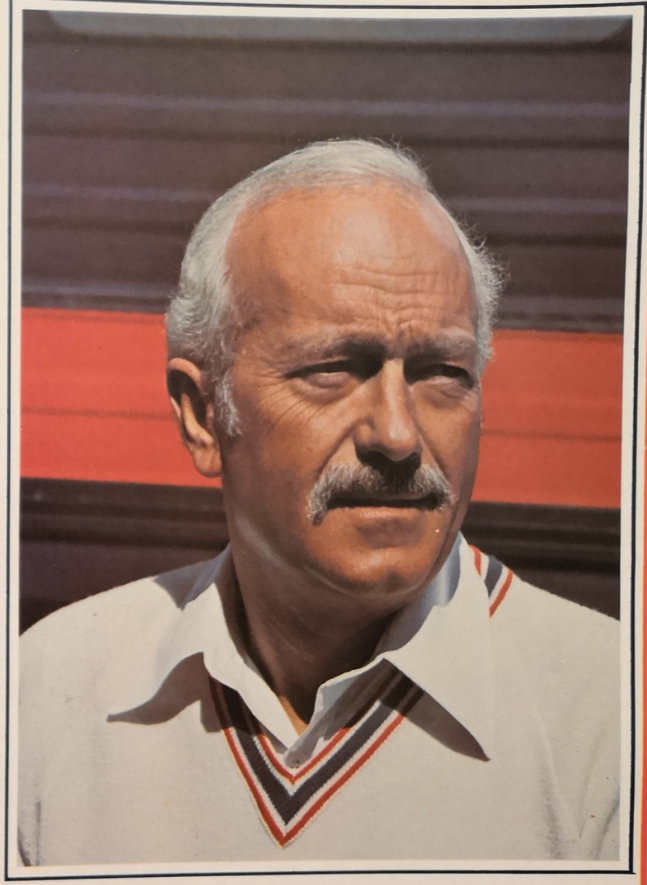
Rear views of the Brabham BT49 and the Arrows A3 in the pits. Note how the central part of the car is higher, how the suspension arms are angled, and how the side pods are off the ground. But once they're out on the track, down they go and the ground effect makes itself felt.

When the Brabham is stationary in the pits, the rear brake air scoops are masked by the bodywork. But once in motion on the track, they reappear. The sides of the car are virtually on the ground. It hasn't taken the wing cars long to reappear.

LOTUS: INNOVATION V THE RULES

The Lotus 88 prepares to go out for a few laps. But the sun is going down on this car, and it now sees more of the inside of the garage than the track. Is it about to be outlawed for being too bold?

What will Colin Chapman do if he is deprived of his lust for innovation?



There was something missing at Rio. Where was that black cap, and the pepper and salt moustache? Where was Colin Chapman? Had he gone back to Europe, or maybe to collect his thoughts on a desert island somewhere, far from protests, stewards and black flags, things that had made his life a misery for the past two weeks.

Mike Doddson

Essex Team Lotus arrived in Brazil with the righteous confidence that comes from having stood up for a principle and been proved right. That's what had happened with their ingenious, controversial and very expensive Lotus

T88 Grand Prix car with its double sprung chassis. Since Long Beach, Team Lotus had taken its case to the high court of American motor sport, the ACCUS, and had been vindicated.

By the afternoon of first practice in Rio, however, not only had Colin Chapman's optimism about the new car's potential been frustrated, but the entire team had been plunged into a worse gloom than anything that had overtaken them since Long Beach. Elio de Angelis confessed that the arguments had affected his driving.

"And I was thinking of giving up racing altogether", said a glum Chapman.

Meanwhile the team had fired off enough sheets of closely-spaced typewritten explanatory text to fill a novel. Brazilian race officials had evidently changed their minds (though they weren't quite sure about what), and Chapman — in a Kafka-esque piece of melodrama — had been seen on Brazilian television denouncing the misinterpretation of the word 'the' in the English language.

But Colin Chapman isn't about to entrust the T88 to any museum. He intends to race it, and he announced in Brazil that the car would definitely be taken to Argentina for round three of the FIA's World Championship. There was a vague possibility, he said, that there would be two of the things ready to race in Buenos Aires.

It would be entirely wrong (not to mention boring) to run again through the various procedures, protests, counter protests and tribunals. But it should be pointed out that the major problems affecting this undoubtedly innovative car stem from the opposition of rival teams not from the cussedness of any organising body such as FISA.

At Long Beach the T88 had been passed by the technical inspectors before practice ever began. In the normal course of events, the car would then have been allowed to practice and race, subject only to the normal post race scrutineering to check weight and dimensions. Like so many Lotus innovations before, it would have been accepted — albeit with other reservations — by everyone else.

Again, in Brazil, the T88 met with no opposition from the scrutineers, at least not to begin with. Then, as in California, it met with the unavoidable opposition of the other constructors. There were not so many of them to protest as at Long Beach (one team boss, for example, was off playing golf) but the opposition — from both sides of the recent FISA-FOCA split — was just as fierce.

So strong in fact has been the reaction of rival constructors that Chapman went so far as to suggest that someone was actually close to having intimidated Brazilian race officials.

It certainly looked as though some powerful influences were at work, for no fewer than six protests (each one identical with only the signature and team name different) had been lodged even before the technical inspectors had officially delivered their decision. And when the car was eventually ruled ineligible, it would appear (though race officials do not have to state the exact reason for a car's exclusion) that it had been 'failed' for reasons which everyone knew would have excluded half the field ... if anyone other than Lotus had been singled out for the test.

And it is the opposition of rival constructors which Chapman must continue to fear more than anything else. The rule book is no help at all in the present case, because everyone agrees that it lacks precision and clarity. Chapman argues from a logical point of view: *"our car meets the spirit of the rules"*, he pleads. But he also admits that it is impossible to know what was in the mind of the rule-maker when he was writing the rules And because of the very lack of precision and clarity in the rules it is impossible to interpret them against the new Lotus. Indeed, it was suggested by one constructor that the rules as written would be deemed to exclude cars of a particular colour if anyone was willing to argue the point.

It has been proved once before, in 1978, that concerted action by the majority of the teams against just one of their number is more than enough to ensure the rejection of a new piece of racing hardware. For it was in 1978 that the Brabham team's splendid fan car found itself out in the cold. Even before it had raced, Brabham boss Bernie Ecclestone had submitted the principle of the car — which used a fan driven from the crankshaft to force air from the sealed underside of the car through a rear radiator — to the FISA (then called the CSI) for its prior approval. The fan car raced, and won, only once. Despite Ecclestone's protests, the opposing constructors including Chapman, forced if off the tracks.

Chapman argues that the T88 does not offend the fine print as closely as the Brabham. Indeed, he points out that the six centimeter rule which the T88 so cleverly side-steps was not even mentioned until a year after research into the double sprung chassis system had been completed. As a further vindication of his good faith, Chapman points out that a fully skirted version of the car, the T86, was ready to race before the 1981 skirt ban came into effect. That car was scrapped before it could be entered for a race, and he is determined that the same fate shall not befall the T88.

Chapman's past trend-setters have always been received grudgingly by rival constructors, who at first regard them with suspicion and are then obliged to follow his example. Among the more prominent examples are his monocoque chassis in 1962, inboard front brakes in 1972, and the development of aerodyanamic ground effects in 1978. It is also worth mentioning that it was on a Lotus that the first suspension-mounted wing was seen, in 1969, with dramatic results on lap times. Unhappily, the failure of the tall wings mounted on the Lotus 49s of Rindt and Hill at Barcelona led to an instant ban on their use on safety grounds.

It is not without irony that a later interpretation of the rule which banned those wings is the same one which some constructors would cite as their reason for refusing to admit the double sprung chassis.

Whether one agrees with Chapman's reasoning or not, however, it is clear that he is entitled to argue his case under circumstances which do not amount to a boycott. Provided the car is safe — and that he is prepared to risk losing any prize money or points that it might win while racing 'sub judice' — he is surely entitled to proceed without intimidation with the development of a car that is so obviously fresh and original. He insists that his system of twin sprung chassis is a potential boon to the everyday driver (Lotus aerodynamicist Peter Wright stumbled across the idea while working on the Lotus Esprit sports car in a wind tunnel), which would obviously justify further reasearch under competition conditions. □

PROST *Scriptum*

There's nothing quite so important for a driver than motivation. One of the reasons that I left McLaren was that they just didn't seem determined enough to win the World Championship. When I went quite well during practice or a race, Teddy Mayer was happy. They were pleased when I finished fifth in a race. It never occured to anyone to wonder why I hadn't won the race.

It may seem rather presumptuous for a driver in only his second season in Formula One to shoot his mouth off like this, but it's the only way that a team's going to win the World Championship.

I'm not racing in Formula One because I'm happy to set a reasonable time in practice and maybe climb into the third step of the rostrum when things are going right. My aim is to be World Champion. But after racing with McLaren in their basically uncompetitive cars, distracted by inter-team bickering, my only aim was to finish ahead of John Watson. It simply wasn't good enough. Little by little I lost my determination. It was inevitable.

What was the point of driving at eleven tenths, working like mad to get the car properly balanced to only set 14th fastest time? I was sorely tempted to say to hell with it. The general lack of enthusiasm in the McLaren team slowly wore me down and affected my behaviour. It's something that eats away at you. You have no desire to get into the car, less to go out and test, and even less to try and get your engineers to set up the car properly, because you know that it isn't going to change anything at the very heart of the problem. You may lose two or three places on the grid, but when you're floundering around the in the middle of the grid anyway, who's going to notice?

But a driver who's struggling to win won't give up for a moment, he can't afford to. He has to be very demanding, not only of himself but of those around him. But I was also rather apprehensive at McLaren when I got into the car towards the end of the season because of the number of accidents I'd had caused by mechanical breakages. Then I knew that I had to leave the team. I think that if a driver stays with a second rate team it affects his determination to become World Champion, whatever his own talent. It's hard to climb back up.

But that's why I'm particularly happy in the Renault team. They want to be World Champions. In fact better than that, in some ways they have to be World Champions. A top three placing isn't good enough for them. It's ideal as far as I'm concerned, although it also means that I have more responsibility than I had at McLaren. But it doesn't upset me, it's simply the price one must pay for becoming World Champion.

In joining the Renault team, I've almost joined a family, because I know a lot of the team members already. I have total confidence in them and I think they have confidence in me. As for setting up the car, the situation is quite clear. I do exactly as I wish. The fact that I'm number two driver doesn't really affect me because I don't suffer from it in the slightest. René and I are treated entirely equally.

But I do think it's important for there to be a good atmosphere within the team if we're to win the World Championship. That's especially true of the two drivers. There are so many things to learn that we have to work together and to combine our results. A World Championship title rewards the work of a whole team as much as the talent of one man. Fortunately, I get on really well with René.

There are three main elements which contribute towards the making of a World Champion: the quality of material, the determination of the members of the team (and also the way they work together) and finally luck. When a driver is considering joining a team, he examines the first two elements. He can make a mistake, but as far as I can tell at this stage of the season, I haven't made a wrong decision. □

A Prost

Cockpits

SAUDIA LEYLAND WILLIAMS

Williams-Ford FW07/11 :
Alan Jones (AUS)
Williams-Ford FW07/12 :
Carlos Reutemann (RA)
Williams-Ford FW07/10 :
Spare.

The Williams team had fitted new hydraulic suspension to Alan Jones's car for the unofficial practice during Wednesday, but it didn't appear to be successful and wasn't seen again all weekend. Reutemann, meanwhile, was faster with normal suspension. However, it's likely that the hydraulic suspension will reappear in Argentina.
During both days of official practice, Jones was in trouble trying to find the right balance, not only with his normal race car but also with the spare.
Reutemann, however, was much happier. He set the fastest time on the Friday but could do little about Piquet's very quick time in the Brabham the next day. The car's side pods seemed to rub on the ground rather frequently, but Reutemann was sufficiently relaxed to be able to find time to wander along and watch operations in the Brabham pit during final practice.
The warm-up was a problem for the Williams team. Reutemann broke his clutch, and Jones was still in trouble setting up his car, so he took a small gamble in making certain modifications for the race.
The outcome, of course, was William's fourth one-two, admittedly helped by the rain, Piquet's wrong tyre choice, and the team's incredible reliability.

RAGNO BETA ARROWS

Arrows-Ford A3/03 :
Riccardo Patrese (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/06 :
Siegfried Stohr (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/02 :
Spare.

Two weeks previously, Dave Wass's modified Arrows was the surprise of Long Beach, but was it just a flash in the pan? The cars arrived in Brazil with little changed apart a new front wing with side plates.
Riccardo Patrese ran over some kerbing on the Friday and badly damaged the underside of his car. Consequently it handled differently in right-handers to left-handers all of Friday, but the problem was cured for Saturday and he qualified very well on the second row.
His teammate Siegfried Stohr had clutch problems during the first session, and then had a worrying moment during the first session on Saturday. He flattened his front wing and promptly went straight off the track and damaged his wing support and steering. He managed to qualify in the afternoon, although he wasn't too happy with his own performance. It must be said that he hasn't really found his own limit in Formula One.
Patrese started on wets while Stohr went for slicks, which most certainly had something to do with his spin at the start. It took him a while to restart as the tyres spun on the wet grass, but then he had another more terminal spin on the 21st lap. Riccardo, meanwhile, did superbly and proved that the team is getting somewhere with the A3. He finished in third place and was well congratulated by the team when he crossed the line.

ENSIGN

Ensign-Ford MN180B/15 :
Marc Surer (CH)

The Theodore team were the underdogs of Long Beach : this time it was the Ensign people. They seemed to be really down in the dumps : no money, no new car, no sponsor and almost no hope. Londono's financial support appeared to be the only way of saving the team, but not even he was allowed to drive. But as so often happens, the bottom of the pit was reached, and the only way was up. Marc Surer had a superb race and was a magnificient fourth at the end. Mo Nunn wanted one point this year ; Marc has already won three.
The only novelty on the Ensign was a larger front wing made of carbon fibre. The team tested on Wednesday afternoon when Surer had a shock. He went out and set up the car like a test driver, and then had to hand it over to the wealthy Londono which scarcely made him happy. However, his smile reappeared when Londono spun the car and couldn't restart after an unimpressive performance.
Surer's first day of practice was brought to a close by a leaking oil radiator. Mo Nunn had a new one made in a workshop in Rio but it wasn't ready until after practice had begun the next day. But even if the little English team had a worrying practice, it was amply compensated by a fairy-tale race.

ESSEX LOTUS

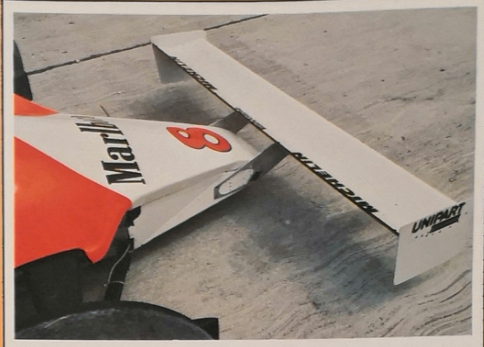
Lotus-Ford 88/1 :
Elio de Angelis (I)
Lotus-Ford 81/2 :
Nigell Mansell (GB)
Lotus-Ford 88/3 :
Spare.

Just as at Long Beach, the black flag was given to the Lotus 88 before Elio de Angelis had really had time to even try and set up his new car. According to the Italian, sorting out the car's suspensions will be a matter of finding the right balance of shock absorbing for the two chassis. However, it wasn't resting to note that hand pressure would cause the body chassis to dip — presumably wind pressure would push the thing hard into the ground...
So Elio de Angelis had to drive his old Lotus 81 and the thought obviously didn't please him. He simply wasn't interested. He was disappointed and undetermined, knowing that the car wasn't very competitive. He qualified even though the car wasn't very stable in the faster corners because it lost grip. He improved the general handling by fitting a smaller rear wing.
Nigel Mansell went off the road on the Friday without damaging the car, but lost the left rear wheel during the warm-up. His mechanics had to work hard to prepare the car in time for the race.
De Angelis managed to stay ahead of the two Talbot Ligiers throughout the race and finished fifth. Mansell also managed to finish, although the last minute rebuild had not permitted the car to be set up properly.

TALBOT GITANES

Talbot-Matra JS 17/02 :
Jacques Laffite (F)
Talbot-Matra JS 17/03 :
Jean-Pierre Jabouille (F)
then Jean-Pierre Jarier (F)
Talbot-Matra JS 17/01 :
Spare

There was really only one Talbot-Ligier worth talking about at Rio, that of Jacques Laffite. The other car was shared by Jean-Pierre Jabouille who really still convalescing, and Jean-Pierre Jarier who had only one session in which to sort and qualify the car.
The blue and white cars are actually a lot less competitive at the beginning of this season than they have been for the past two years. There's one reason that seems quite fair : the cars aren't balanced, - *a whole range of little things* - explained Jabouille expecting things to be right at a later date. Then there's another reason. - *Uncompetitive in comparison to whom and what ?* - commented Gérard Ducarouge, - *in comparison to a load of cheats ?* -
Both cars were fitted with an extra oil radiator to cope with the considerable heat. Laffite used his race car on the Friday and his spare on the Saturday, but neither car really pleased him. He tried both small front nose fins and a big front wing but still couldn't find the answer. Furthermore, he lost time during the warm-up because the engine was running too lean.
Jarier took over Jabouille's car only on Saturday afternoon, and almost immediately (third lap), went off the road. - *I came out of a corner too wide,* - he admitted. He took over Laffite's car as the latter was using the spare, and Jarier qualified on the back row.
Laffite was held up during the race because his electrical system was affected by the wet as was Jarier's at the end of the race. Jean-Pierre obeyed his team's signals to drop back and allow Laffite to win a single point for the sixth place.



MARLBORO MCLAREN

McLaren-Ford M29/2 :
John Watson (GB)
McLaren-Ford M29/5 :
Andrea de Cesaris (I)
McLaren-Ford M29/1 :
Spare.

The MP4 was returned to England immediately after Long Beach as it was clearly in need of modification and testing. Consequently, there were three M29s for the drivers in Brazil. They were fitted with new front and rear wings, but the former were taken off the cars again before official practice began.
The M29s have rarely been competitive since they first appeared and continue to be outdated, so these early races have only served to allow de Cesaris to find his feet within the team and the Formula. But he didn't get very far in the race. He retired after nine laps with wet electrics. As usual, Watson proved that he's still competitive when the rain makes all drivers and cars fairly equal, and he drove well until spinning and losing three places, which also cost him points.

Cockpits

FITTIPALDI

Fittipaldi-Ford F8/3 :
Keke Rosberg (SF)
Fittipaldi-Ford F8/4 :
Chico Serra (BR)
Fittipaldi-Ford F8/2 :
Spare

Everything's fine. I feel good, it's a nice day, life is great. We're all fine, except that the cars aren't very competitive, said Keke Rosberg during practice. Certainly the Fittipaldis were scarcely competitive during practice at Rio. Rosberg had an off on Friday morning, but otherwise complained of nothing specific, just a host of little things, and couldn't really find the right balance. He qualified on the sixth row, and Serra started from the penultimate row.
The Brazilian was mixed up in the startline shunt and got no further. The ebullient Finn fought hard for his places. He was sixth on the first lap and fifth ten laps later, but he couldn't hold on to his position and slowly the others overhauled him. It was only when Tambay caught him that the Finn managed to maintain his position. Poor old Keke : all that effort for ninth place.

THEODORE RACING

Theodore-Ford TY 01/1 :
Patrick Tambay (SF)

The Theodore team continues to surprise onlookers. There is only a small budget, a few team members yet the material seems good and the driver gets the best from it. Not surprisingly, there weren't many modifications since Long Beach, the personnel having a long enough job list of things that were never done at Long Beach. They were also stuck in the USA for a while after the American race. Furthermore they clearly have to look after the money. After setting a reasonable time on Saturday morning, Tambay pulled off in order to save his engine.
Patrick's only real problem during practice was when he bent the front wing on the Friday but the car was clearly fast enough and qualified quite reasonably. The French driver lived rather dangerously during the first lap when he spun at the end of the straight having been blinded by the rain. By the end, he'd caught Rosberg and was battling with the Finn for ninth place. But it was in vain, the Theodore's straightline speed being insufficient to overtake.
Even so, the very fact that the car had finished its second race was an encouraging sign. *That's the way we make progress* said Tambay. *We have to finish races and always be there at the end. That's the way the team gains experience and we can find some backing.*

PARMALAT BRABHAM

Brabham-Ford BT 49/11 :
Nelson Piquet (BR)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/12 :
Hector Rebaque (MEX)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/9 :
Spare

The hydraulic suspension system which didn't really work at Long Beach reappeared at Jacarepagua. This drops the bodywork onto the ground once the car is under way and improvements were made in leaps and bounds by the Brabham team, although its rivals weren't at all happy about this hydraulic system. But Gordon Murray was delighted with the daily progress. So Nelson Piquet was favourite to win, ultil he made the wrong tyre choice. He started onslicks and traipsed round at the back of the field. Hector Rebaque, using the car fitted with Weismann gearbox as usual had to retire after the electrics broke.

FERRARI SEFAC

Ferrari 126 C-K/051 :
Gilles Villeneuve (CDN)
Ferrari 126 C-K/049 :
Didier Pironi (F)
Ferrari 126 C-K/050 :
Spare.

The Comprex system wasn't used at Jacarepagua. The Scuderia received from Italy a new Comprex which was four kilos lighter, but it couldn't be fitted because of lack of time. It takes six hours to take out and refit an engine. But the Ferraris were fitted with new bodywork with different internal air channels, leading the air to the back of the car. The extractors in front of the rear wheels had disappeared, but new air vents had appeared in the side pods. There was also a new three piece rear wing.
As early as Wednesday's unofficial practice, the Ferrari drivers were complaining of their cars' handling. They managed to cure the problem a little, in spite of a number of minor problems which prevented either driver from lapping very much. Both went off the track on the Friday, and Pironi also suffered a broke turbo. Gilles lost time when his car's fire extinguisher went off by itself.
On Saturday, Villeneuve qualified well on the fourth row. Didier wasn't so happy. He went of the road again and had to qualify in the spare which didn't have a very good engine. Unfortunately, by the time it was working properly, Pironi had run out of new tyres.
Villeneuve chose rain tyres for the start while Pironi took the gamble of slicks. The Canadian's race was short-lived, losing his wing against Prost at the start, and then quitting when the turbo tightened. Pironi scarcely had more luck thanks to his tyre choice. He acquaplaned off and hit Prost as he was being lapped, both cars retiring there and then.

RENAULT ELF

Renault RE 27B :
René Arnoux (FR)
Renault RE 26B :
Alain Prost (F)
Renault RE 22B :
Spare.

It was another fruitless Grand Prix for the Renault team. Both cars were quite well placed at the start, Prost starting fifth and Arnoux in eigth. The cars had proved to be good during the warm-up and handled well on full tanks. But they were immediately at a disadvantage once it was clear that the race was going to be held on a wet track.
The cars were scarcely modified since Long Beach, Larrousse's men concentrating on testing the RE 30 which will appear at Imola.
Prost had gearbox trouble on the Friday and set fourth fastest time in the spare car. He used the spare again the next days but was bumped off fourth spot by Patrese. Arnoux wasn't happy with his car during the first session but had improved it by the second when he set eighth fastest time. But then he went off the track and damaged his monocoque and suspension. So he took over Prost's car while Prost used the spare for the race. Following three separate incidents involving the servo assisted brakes, Gerard Larrousse decided to abandon the servo for the race. After Prost's brief race at Long Beach, it was Arnoux's turn at Rio to be involved in a start-line shunt. Alain tried hard to keep Laffite behind him during the race, but was then thumped by the acquaplaning Pironi, so neither Renault finished.

ALFA ROMEO AUTODELTA

Alfa Romeo 179C/02 :
Mario Andretti (USA)
Alfa Romeo 179C/03 :
Bruno Giacomelli (I)
Alfa Romeo 179C/01 :
Spare.

There were a number of minor modifications to the Italian cars, notably concerning the side pods and bodywork around the rear wheels.
Andretti and Giacomelli started practice with their cars set up in different ways. Bruno's was basically similar to the way it had been at Long Beach, while Mario's was along different lines. Friday's times favoured Andretti, so Giacomelli's car was set up similarly.
On Saturday, the Alfa-Romeo men modified the wing angle, springs and anti-roll bars on both cars. Giacomelli improved dramatically, better than his teammate which boosted his morale. Until then he seemed rather disappointed by the atmosphere within the team. Andretti had a problem with his car on the Saturday and had to use the spare which he found difficult to balance.
Raceday's warm-up revealed a small electrical problem on both cars, eventually traced to the batteries.
Mario did only 20 yards of the race before being involved in the start-line shunt which Bruno fortunately missed, only to be held up by more electrical trouble. Even a complete change of the system failed to cure the problem.

TYRRELL

Tyrrell-Ford 010/3-6 :
Eddie Cheever (USA)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/1 :
Ricardo Zunino (RA)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/2 :
Spare.

Apart from Ricardo Zunino's inclusion in the team, the main novelties on Ken Tyrrell's cars were a large front wing on the first day, replaced by more conventional front nose fins on the Saturday. Extractors in front of the rear wheels were also in evidence.

Cheever had various fuel feed troubles on his race car on the Friday. On Saturday, when using the spare car, he found it better set up and tried to convert his own car to the same set-up, but failed.

Cheever had part of his suspension broken in the start-line shunt and spent a while in the pits having it mended before rejoining some way behind. Zunino kept going, at the back of the field, and finished 13th.

MARCH

March-Ford 811/02 :
Derek Daly (IRL)
March-Ford 811/03 :
Eliseo Salazar (RCH)

The Marchs appeared to have improved after their testing at Laguna Seca, but never really had a chance to prove it. On Friday morning, Daly's front suspension parted company with the chassis and the resulting accident damaged his chassis beyond repair. It appeared to be a problem over different metals used in the construction, and Robin Herd immediately returned to England to supervise the construction of a new monocoque. Daly never got behind the wheel again, and after a number of spins, Salazar never qualified.

ATS WHEELS

ATS-Ford D4/05 :
Jan Lammers (NL)

ATS had a number of wings to test during practice, but Lammers went off the road twice on the Friday, bending his wings and damaging the front of the chassis on the second occasion. That held up his practice, and he just failed to qualify. He hoped he might be able to start if Mansell's mechanics failed to repair the Englishman's Lotus in time, but that wasn't to be.

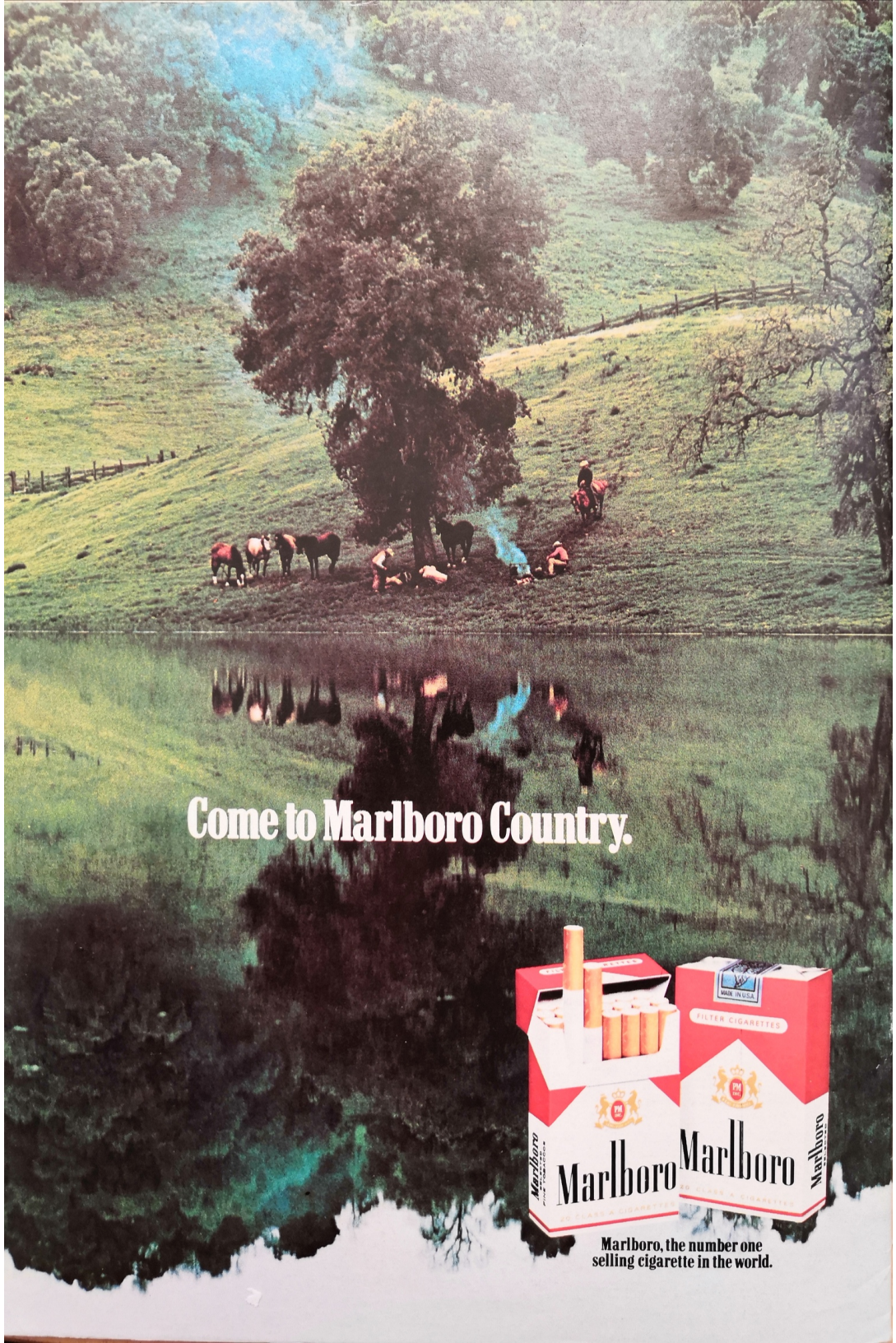
DENIM OSELLA

Osella-Ford A1/03 :
Beppe Gabbiani (I)
Osella-Ford A1/04 :
Miguel-Angel Guerra (RA)
Osella-Ford A1/02 :
Spare.

Both Osellas had new front and rear suspension mountings for Brazil. The two young drivers in the team had a number of problems which they found hard to cure, especially as Enzo Osella was ill in hospital on the Friday, and was scarcely any better the next day. After not qualifying, Gabbiani was very upset as he was certain that he'd done his very best.

GRAND-PRIX N°30
ARGENTINA

WILL BE ON SALE ON APRIL 22.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